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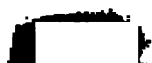
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KATE GEAREY;

OR,

IRISH LIFE IN LONDON.

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OR,

IRISH LIFE IN LONDON.

A TALE OF 1849.

BY

MISS MASON.

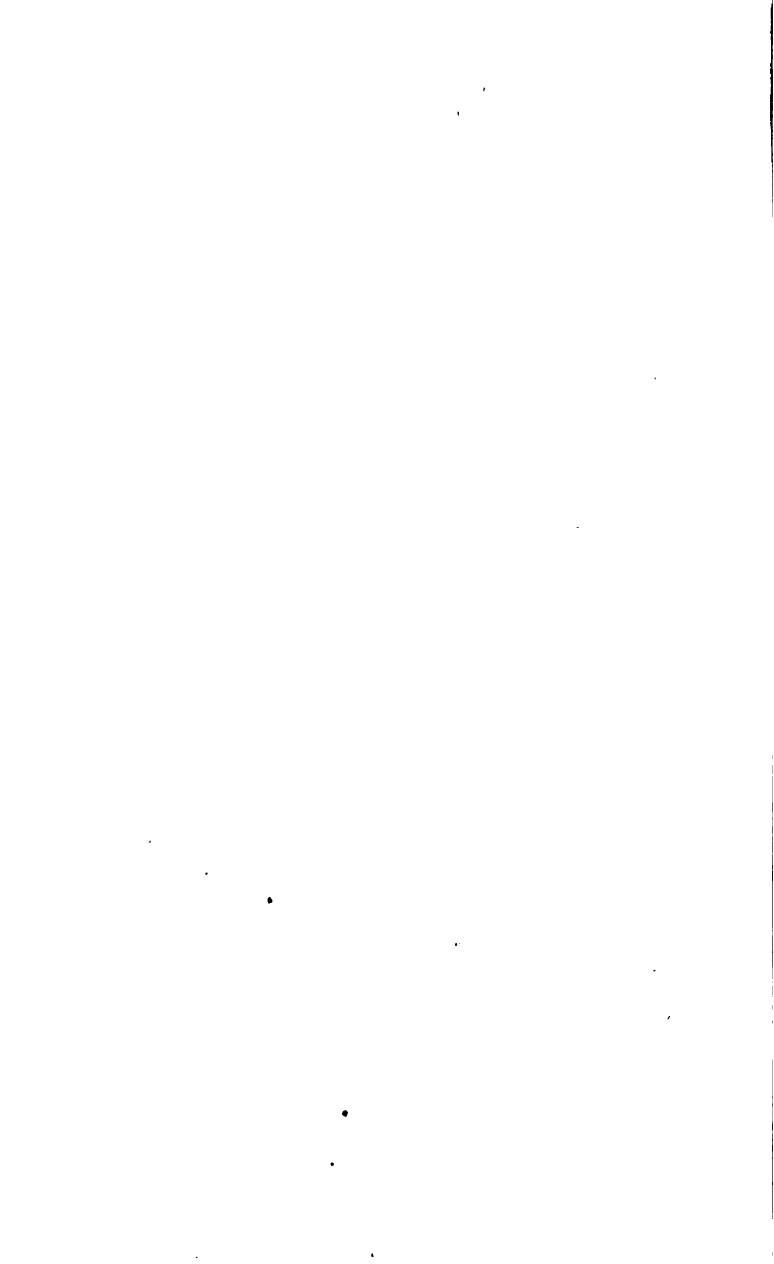


LONDON :

**CHARLES DOLMAN, 61, NEW BOND STREET,
AND 22, PATERNOSTER ROW.**

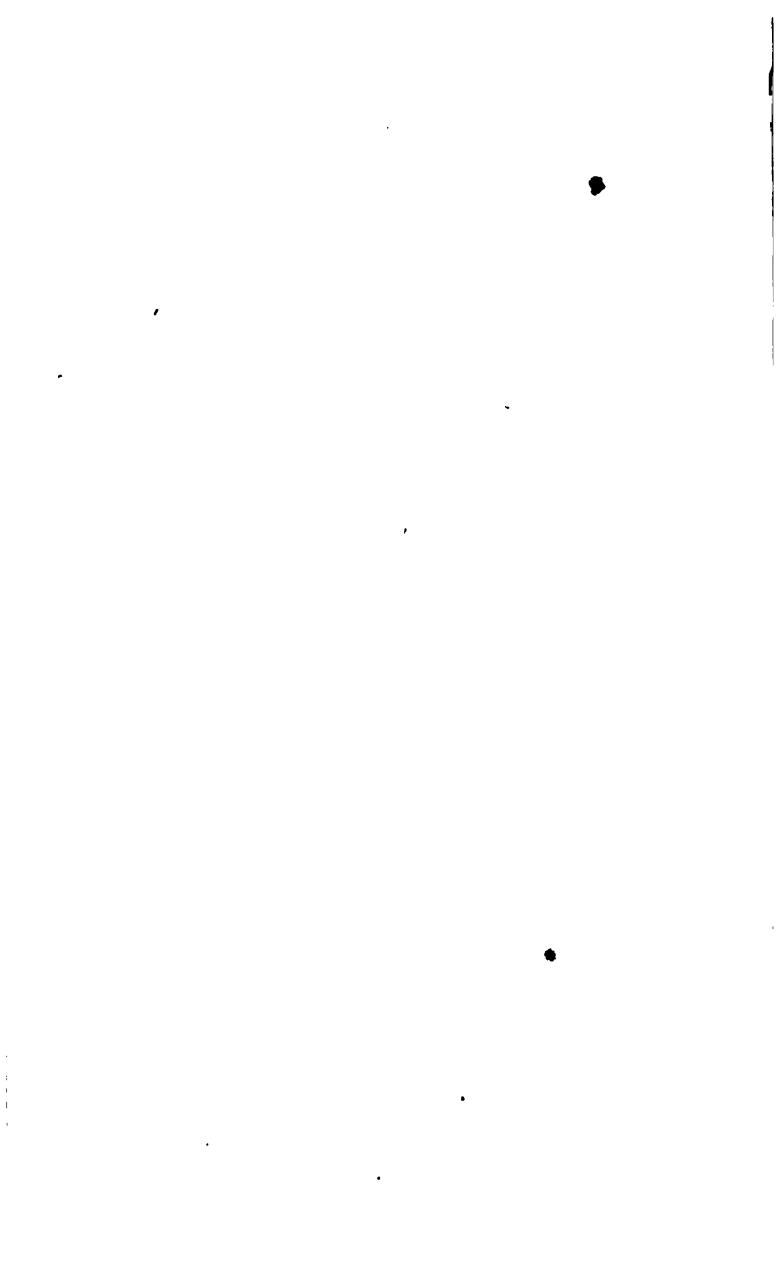
1853.

249. C. 208.



P R E F A C E.

To say that the following tale is *founded* on facts, would be less than truth. Most of the scenes were witnessed by the Authoress herself; and she has been induced to throw them thus together, in hopes that the sanitary evils under which so large a portion of the London population suffer, once known, will not be long without a remedy.



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KATE GEAREY;

OR,

IRISH LIFE IN LONDON.

•

splendid pastrycook's. The locality suited the butcher well enough, inasmuch as his slaughter-houses—he killed on the premises—ran down the said Buildings ; but what took the pastrycook there I never could guess. There is his shop, however, and there it was two years ago, in all the glory of barley-sugar temples, wedding-cakes, bath-buns, and tarts, on which the poor ragged urchins would gaze by the hour together, wondering if any lady or gentleman would throw them a bit, and envying, in their hunger, the pampered spaniels who were feeding on the dainties within. An omnibus approaches ; the whole group is in motion, performing most extraordinary evolutions with their arms and legs, under the noses of the horses, for the entertainment of city men, who occasionally reward these human windmills with a halfpenny. I never yet, however, heard that any of these halfpence found their way into the splendid shop ; the sight of the middle-aged lady with the smart cap, and the young lady with the showy necklace and no cap at all, drive the fortunate possessors of the halfpence to old Norry, the sweet-stuff woman, who sits at the corner of the square on a broken stool, her feet in an old apple-basket, which on a wet day answers all the hydropathic purposes of a cold bath.

Norry's fingers are continually busy arranging her stock, "jist to keep her hand in for the customers." Poor old Norry ! I see her now, with her unwashed face, a red cotton handkerchief tied under her chin, her ragged blue petticoat, and the thin shawl pinned across her breast, wistfully watching for buyers. Norry's brandy-balls and sugar shoulders of mutton

have, however, no attractions for yon group of youthful aristocrats, who, in short muslin petticoats, flounced polkas, and enormous hats with huge cockades and long streamers, are wending their ways to the park, under the escort of a pompous-looking nurse, a coquettish young lady with sandaled shoes, lace veil, reticule, and parasol, who by courtesy is designated a nurse-maid, and a meek-looking nursery governess, who brings up the rear and leads the poodle. As to the children of the neighbours, they had rarely ready cash, so they wheedled and teased the old woman to give them credit; and their names would be still on poor Norry's books, had she left any such documents behind her. Norry rented a back cellar at No. 3, in the Buildings. It had once been used as a receptacle for mortar, and could boast neither flooring nor window. The substitute for the latter was a square hole looking into a damp filthy passage (for Norry's abode was some feet beneath the level of the yard), which admitted both light and air; the latter must have been of a remarkably pure quality, as the old lady's "opposite neighbour" was a large public dust-hole. There the greengrocer in the parlour threw his stale vegetables, which were allowed to rot in company with soap-suds, and other odoriferous compounds more easily imagined than described. As every one used the dust-hole, of course it was no one's business to empty it; and there it remained, forming a steep bank between the back and the front "kitchen." Norry's bed was of a peculiar description. She was subject to rheumatism; and a bedstead was an unknown luxury to most of the inhabitants of the Buildings. "But what did the like of her want wid a

doore? She had nothing to lose, barrin' the sweet-stuff," and that she'd put under her head. So the door was taken off its hinges, laid on the ground, and did double service; on it during the day did Norry squat *à la Turc*, for it served at once for divan and table; and at night it formed an "illigant" couch, her attire, sleeping and waking, being generally the same. An old rug sufficed for bedding; but Norry liked her head high; so, after arranging her sweet-stuff on one end of the door, she turned a basket over it, placed another on that, and laid her down to rest.

For twelve years had the old dame paid one shilling and threepence per week for this subterraneous palace. At length a party of rats, disturbed from a neighbouring cesspool, took it into their heads to favour her by nocturnal visits. "They gnawed the ould cloak." Norry was frightened, and took a lodger. Jim Casey was a widower of seventy-two; Norry White a widow of sixty-nine. "So the neybour's couldn't talk, any how." Yet I must confess I was rather surprised a few months afterwards, just before the commencement of my story, to find Norry White metamorphosed into Mrs. Casey. Her reasons (when did an Irishwoman want them?) were sufficiently prudential. "He had a fine sackful o' straw for the bed; I had the doore and the coverin'; sure wasn't it betther to mak a jint consarn av it; and now that he's in the 'house' with the asthma, haven't I it all to meeself?" And, accordingly, Mrs. Casey, as the "rint" was heavy, busied herself looking out for another lodger.

It was, then, a fine spring afternoon, and old Norry sat at her stall, not waiting for customers,—that she

knew was useless,—but listlessly gazing at the splendid equipages which rattled past, or with a more lively interest watching the proceedings of the “Gracians,” as one by one they disappeared, within the precincts of the Buildings; the more fortunate claimed by “a boy from their own parts,” the remainder having struck a bargain for six feet by three of the flooring of a back garret for present accommodation, for which, by the bye, they were to pay about a third of the actual rent of a room which already contained three families.

“Good mornin’, Missis Toomey,” ejaculated Norry, as a tall raw-boned termagant, a moving stack of filth, with a sickly infant in her arms, and two barefooted urchins clinging to her ragged gown, sauntered towards her. “How do you find yourself this fine *evenin’*, ma’am?”

“Can’t be worse, Mrs. Casey! can’t be worse, ma’am,” answered the Amazon, whose eyes bore the visible marks of a pugilistic encounter, and whose breath was strongly redolent of beer and tobacco. “God help the like on us! Here’s Mickey, the baste, says I’m dhrunk; so he up wid his fist, the dirty spalpeen, and giv’ me these two black eyes; and what’ll I say whin guverness calls to-morrow about the childre?”

“Whew! does guverness call if the children don’t attind riglar like? I thought she left all that to the clargy and Miss Bradshawe.”

“I don’t mane our own Catholic guverness of the Buildings,” said Mrs. Toomey, looking as if she would blush if she could, and gnawing the corner of a very dirty apron; “but you see the winter was like to be

a very savare one ; Mickey spint more than he earnt at the corner there," pointing in the direction of a large public-house ; " so the district ladies said they'd pay Murray's score if so be I'd send the childre to the ragged school in the Hollow."

" What'll they larn there ?" inquired Norry, drily.

" The Scripters, I'm towld," answered Mrs. Toomey. " Murray's a bittther Prodistant, you know ; I did not like to be obligated to the likes o' him, an' I got a few tickets for soup and coals, so what's the harm done ? The childre' will soon unlarn all they've larnt there, ownly they'll miss the pennies anyhow."

" Miss the pennies ?" inquired Norry ; " what is it you mane by that ?"

" Why, you see, the ladies found out that being ould Catherlics like, the parents didn't choose the childre to say any prayers but their own ; an' when the min tuk the pledge, and Easter kumin' too, they scolded the likes o' me for selling our religion, and not for a belly-ful aither, jist as if it wasn't all make-belief for the winther ; so they dopted a plan to giv' the childre a penny when they kum unknownt, an' it'll be hard to break them of it anyhow."

" God be betune us and harm !" ejaculated Mrs. Casey, crossing herself devoutly, for with all her faults the old woman was a strict and well-living Catholic. She had left the dhrink many's the long year ; and for the cursing, what good ever came on it ? Did it ever make the pot bile or kindle the sticks ? It angered God, and the ripribate talk kept all the good people from the coort, and deprived the likes av her of many a little comfort which her own ladies would bring her.

"God be betune us and harm ! Peg Toomey," repeated the old woman sternly ; " it's not what I expict from the like of you. Your mother kumm'd from the same place as meeself ; I remimber her when she wore a feather in her high-crowned hat on a Sunday, and rinted a house at thirty-five pounds a year ; before you were born, Peg. She died in disthress in this counthry, the craythur ; but she never sent her childre to a Pro-distant school, and that's what your childre won't be able to say anyhow."

To any one else, Mrs. Toomey's reply would have been peculiarly adapted to the neighbourhood, of which she figured as one of the most distinguished orators ; but, half-drunk as she was, she had a sort of respect for old Norry ; so shaking the poor infant until it was black in the face, and then heartily cuffing the dirty little imps at her heels for making it cry, she lounged away, muttering to herself, and snarling at all whom she encountered. Mrs. Toomey's abode being a back parlour, some six feet square, she banged the door with dignified violence, let the infant slip from her lap on the hearth, where it found a solace in the embraces of an old kettle, and sank into a slumber, from which she was aroused by the return of her husband from his smoking club, tired and cross. Over the scene which followed we draw a veil ; suffice it, Peggy's black eyes were no better in the morning, and Mickey appeared with a deep cut across the forehead, tradition says inflicted by the broken candlestick.

Old Norry gazed after her for a moment or two in silence, then busied herself gathering together her traps, giving vent, as she did so, to such disjointed sentences

as the following : " Well, it's a sorry sight ! A dacent woman's child, too. Ah well ! when they neglect the duty, all goes ; she'll never comb grey hairs anyhow."

At the month of the Buildings Mrs. Casey paused, as if to inhale a parting breath of comparatively pure air, when contrasted with that of the gloomy narrow vista into which she was about to plunge ; but Norry was used to it, " didn't mind it anyhow," and turned to depart, when her attention was arrested by a deep-drawn sigh. Looking in the direction of the sound, she observed a slight youthful figure leaning against the rails of the pastrycook's, and a pair of large blue eyes fixed wistfully on the old woman's dirty but not repulsive face. An exclamation of surprise and pity burst from the lips of Mrs. Casey ; the first a tribute to the girl's beauty, the second was drawn forth by her forlorn situation. Norry was too old a stager to mistake the young stranger's position in society ; she knew her at a glance for one of the " Gracians" just arrived ; and as she gazed at the timid modest countenance, " she wished the child had stayed with her people, and not come to lose herself intirely with the riff-raffs of the Buildings." Great, indeed, was the mistake which caused Kate Gearey to stand a houseless wanderer at the corner of — Street ; but it is a mistake into which the majority of her countrywomen fall. Of course I speak of those who bear a good character at home ; for those who have lost both name and prospects, London does as well as any other place : they pick up a precarious livelihood by fair means or foul, disgrace their country, rendering it a byword of scorn in the mouths of strangers ; evade the watchfulness of their priests,

neglect their religion, dupe and laugh at those who would reclaim or save them, and alas! die!—but of that hereafter.

This was not, however, the case with Kate Gearey. True, her childhood had been passed in a mud-cabin; but that cabin stood on the fair banks of the Awbeg, amidst the fertile valleys of Castletown Roche, beneath the time-worn parapets of the Lords of Fermoy, just where the rock-hewn path with its hundred steps leads to the river below—that river whose wooded banks and fertile corn-fields glow with a thousand hues in the golden sunlight. True, her parents were poor; but the blue sky of Ireland was above her, its soft green turf beneath her feet, its pure air around her; and Kattie flourished as the wild flowers in her path. And she was happy too,—happy, good, and beautiful. Who that had seen her kneeling in a quiet corner of the little chapel, telling her beads, and offering her fervent petitions to the dear Mother of her God; or watched her when, wending her homeward way, she paused near the margin of the river, beneath the shadow of the castle walls, and bending with feelings of purest devotion, quaffed in her little palm the clear water of the holy well;—who, I say, would then have deemed that sin and poverty (the poverty of London) could have aught in common with a being as spotless as Kattie? In her fifteenth year, the child grew old in the world's cares; the pig died first, then the cow, then her gentle pious mother. The father moped, took to drinking, and became good for nothing; kept company with those who would only lead him to ruin; talked of leaving the little cabin, and taking Kattie with him.

To avoid this, the poor girl determined to join a party from the next post-town about to embark for Liverpool, and seek her fortune at a distance. It was in vain the good priest of Castletown, who had known her from her infancy, shook his head. He it was who had poured the regenerating waters on her infant brow, received her first confession, stood by her mother's death-bed until the spirit passed away ; no wonder, then, his heart bled for the worse than orphan.

But Kate, with many virtues, shared the faults of most of her countrywomen, and was obstinate in an eminent degree, careless, improvident. Why should she not make a fortune in London ? She was young, strong, and, alas, good-looking ; what more could the English want ? She would get a good service, and be a lady after all. Kate forgot, or probably did not know, that the ways of her father's cabin and those of a town mansion were totally different. London gentlemen do not usually milk cows, fatten their pigs, or bake oaten cakes on turf-ashes. The English have also another peculiarity, an unpleasant one to be sure ; they require a character with their domestics, and even when they have one, are not predisposed in favour of the "dirty and untidy" habits of those from the Emerald Isle. The venerable priest had a vague idea of all this ; but it was of no use arguing, the girl was obstinately bent on taking her own way, therefore he gave her his blessing, with the better half of the contents of his slenderly-stocked purse ; and Kate left her mother's grave and her birth-place, to starve and suffer in a foreign land.

Six hours had not elapsed since Kattie entered

London ; and as, cold, weary, exhausted with hunger, she leant against the rails, she heartily wished herself once more resting by the holy well, or even listening to the gentle chidings of Father Phelim. Of money she had still a trifle remaining ; but she knew neither how to procure food or lodging, until old Norry broke the ice by asking the child, " If any of her people expected her, and where she meant to put up ? " A few explanatory words sufficed, and in less than no time, the pretty modest Kate Gearey was edging her way through the crowded Buildings on her road to Mrs. Casey's domicile, under the especial patronage of that worthy matron,—a fact notified to the " neybour's " by her clutching the girl's arm with one hand, whilst with the other she trailed along her whole stock in trade, mysteriously united by Norry's apron-string, broken off on purpose.

CHAPTER II.

THE BUILDINGS.

LEAVING Norry and Kate Gearey, as they slowly wended along, we will for a few moments pause to survey " the Buildings. " Take it all in all, it is no bad specimen of its class ; whilst the class itself is one I am particularly anxious to introduce to public notice. To be thoroughly appreciated, it must be seen ; yet if any of my readers are gifted with very strong imaginations indeed, they may probably, from my imperfect description, form a faint idea of what I would depict.

"C—— Buildings," then, is a long narrow court, which by courtesy we may denominate paved : it contains some twenty-six houses, though let it not be supposed they are erected with any pretensions to symmetrical form. Altogether irregular, the Buildings include two courts, one on the right hand, about three doors from the entrance, the other on the left, near the middle of the Buildings ; the whole presenting the appearance of a cross, one arm of which has been broken off and joined on again, with a profound contempt for anything approaching architectural precision.

I have often puzzled myself as to the origin of these Buildings. Most of the houses are small, narrow, high, slightly built, just what one sees every day ; but again, here and there, particularly in the farther turn-court, we light on those of a different construction : long gloomy passages, rambling rooms, bits of carved balustrade ; whilst on more than one occasion it has been my good luck, when groping my way in the dark, to run my head against a projecting buttress, or to stumble down two or three broken steps, without any visible termination save the foundation-wall. The end house facing —— Street is, however, of a totally different build from any of its neighbours ; each floor contains a number of rooms, all of which had formerly internal communications one with the other ; although on the ground-floor these entrances are now blocked up, forming separate apartments. You ascend three or four steep steps before arriving where the street-door ought to be (it was long since converted into fire-wood) ; and should you proceed incautiously, you bring yourself in contact with an old rough wall ; for the passage, in-

stead of running straight forward, turns sharp round at a right angle; it is long, narrow, and utterly dark, thickly studded on one hand with dilapidated doors, with here and there a projecting rusty nail, a sort of man-trap for the attire or flesh of the unwary trespasser. This passage is abruptly terminated in a very high unequal staircase, with large holes, either slightly protected by bits of oilcloth, or yawning without even an attempt at disguise. Close to this is a flight of stone steps descending to the kitchens, at the foot of which you encounter an old dry well, considered rather dangerous until you are used to it, more especially as the perfect absence of light renders it extremely dubious whether the traveller is proceeding to the upper or lower stories. Nor is the ascent an easy one (the balustrades having shared the fate of the door); for before you are aware of it, and when you perhaps hoped to discover some kind of window, you find yourself on a small open platform of brick, containing another well, at a dizzy height from the yard, without railing of any kind, amidst an admired confusion of milk-cans, &c., which the "carriers" bring here to cleanse, paying so much to the landlord for the "convenience" of the well. Escaping this danger, you traverse another passage more perilous than the former, inasmuch as one false step precipitates you over the unguarded stair-head; you are therefore obliged to feel your way by the occasional projections as you pass. It is surprising that so few accidents do occur; though, excepting the inmates themselves, the neighbouring priests, to whom these scenes of wretchedness are familiar, and one or two thoroughly acquainted with

the locality, few enter into this particular house. A large room, communicating with all the others on the same landing, terminates this gallery ; a second steep stair, a similar passage, another over that, and the description of the place is complete.

Perhaps no house in the whole Buildings bears a worse name than the one of which I am particularly speaking. The landlord does not reside on the premises (always an evil) ; the ground-floor is let out in separate tenements ; but the first, second, and third stories are engaged at a high rent by those who take in lodgers,—no questions asked, no impertinent curiosity evinced, except as to the length of their purse. Woe therefore to the inexperienced being driven to seek shelter in the “Large House,” as it is generally styled. The “Large House” has also another convenience which we will here mention (to the cursory observer the Buildings are without a thoroughfare) ; for between it and a sort of half-house, very small and low, is a narrow gateway of wrought iron, defended by formidable spikes, and divided by a strong bar, so as to afford ingress or egress to but one person at a time. This gateway, which divides the houses, terminates in a steep flight of stone steps, worn, broken, and rendered so slippery by the slime of well-trampled vegetable matter, as to be perilous to both neck and limb, especially at night, the time during which they are in the greatest request ; these steps lead to a respectable mews, known in the Buildings by the name of the “Hollow,” and containing the very ragged-schools alluded to by Mrs. Toomey in the first chapter : this terminates, as almost all other mews do, in a deep arch, flanked on one side

by a large gin-palace, on the other by a pawnbroker's, either of which businesses ever flourishes in the heart of poverty and dirt.

So much for the casual passer-by. The initiated are aware of sundry communications,—not smooth or straightforward, to be sure, but passages which no one would think of,—betwixt the mews and another alley, leading also into a first-rate street facing an opposite quarter of the town. This was an incalculable advantage to the idle, good-for-nothing portion of either court, more especially the first. Should a too-hardy policeman venture within the precincts of the Buildings in search of some Lilliputian culprit, convicted of pilfering apples, or the still greater enormity of pitch and toss, the nimble urchin gives chase down the steps, and whilst his portly pursuer stumbles over the unequal pavement of the mews, disappears from his sight as effectually as if he had possessed the talisman of the invisible prince. Were the boys of the Buildings a little excited, and the “force” interfered, a relay could be easily obtained from the court; and as all Irishmen delight in a private row, “jist to keep thimselves warm,” the “Hollow” formed an excellent neutral ground in which to fight it out.

Remarking, then, that the inhabitants of A—— Court “did not consider themselves so low entirely as those of C—— Buildings,” I hasten to return to the latter place, where my story principally lies. Three or four parlours in the Buildings have been converted into a sort of shops for petty hucksters, for the sale of coke, candles, bread, pipes, skimmed milk, &c., which articles are promiscuously heaped together on a long bench

serving for counter, and for all of which about two-thirds more is demanded than is their value at a regular shop ; but these tradesmen being for the most part " landlords," there was nothing to be said, few of their tenants being able to boast of a clear rent-book. There are also two beer-shops in the Buildings, and though last not least, two " dances," one at No. 15, in the kitchen, and the " opposition," in a sort of out-house over the way. Here all the girls and boys, old and young, assemble after dark,—the ball-room being previously enlivened by a few dip-candles, stuck against the wall in tin sconces,—and on payment of one penny to the officiating Orpheus, are allowed to foot it heavily or nimbly, as the case may be. The mischief done by these dances is incredible, it being, as a matter of course, the proprietor's interest to entice every good-looking girl to these haunts of infamy, where they are exposed to all the evils of a contact with half-drunken men, shameless women ; in fact, with all that is sickening and revolting in humanity. The pent air, rendered still more dense by the fumes of tobacco, with which the few flickering lights vainly struggle ; the half-washed faces, where every evil passion seems to revel, as though to parody the very name of mirth ; the squalid forms, rendered still more ghastly by the tawdry finery with which the younger women strive to adorn themselves ; the disgusting language, ribald songs, make one turn sickening from the scene, more especially as we know that there is scarce a neighbourhood frequented by the lower class of Irish which does not possess one or more temples consecrated to these unhallowed orgies. How often have I seen the deserted wife point to her

starving little ones, and say, "He met the hussy at the 'dance,' and left me and the childre'!" How often have I stood by the sick-bed of the heart-stricken mother, and witnessed her tears for her once duteous affectionate girl, now turned to shame, and all through the "dance!" I can vouch for one instance, in which the widow crawled from her pallet, and kneeling down in the midst of the polluted assembly, left her curse on the heads of those who encouraged her child to frequent it, then staggered back insensible to threats and insults, and laid her down to die.

It may be said, "the Irish like dancing; it is an innocent amusement; why deprive them of it?" Innocent in itself, no doubt, and healthful too, on the green-sward of their native village, with the pure air around them, in the companionship of innocent hearts and bright smiles: who would grudge them this? Certainly not I; but for the scenes I have described—scenes acted in the bowels of the earth—they are a curse, and their existence a positive disgrace to civilized society.

The next great nuisance to the dance is a large drain, or cesspool, running completely through the Buildings, which it is asserted has not been emptied for more than thirty years, and which, from the effluvia it emits, through the medium of numerous superfluous gratings, poisons the atmosphere, rendering the houses perfectly uninhabitable. The Buildings have also a peculiarity exclusively their own: once or twice a week, by raising certain plugs, they are literally laid under water, which operation, for the time being, affords unqualified delight to a host of noisy urchins, who make boats of their caps, paddle up to their knees

and pelt one another with the unctuous element, receiving an occasional cuff from such of their elders as may be fortunate enough to partake of the refreshing shower. The inhabitants of the Buildings are numerous—above a thousand—and may be divided into three classes: those in regular work, those who work now and then, and those who never work at all. The first, and of course the least numerous, are denominated “carriers:” they are exclusively women, generally blessed with a lazy drunken husband, and a large family of small children, all of whom they contrive to support out of eight shillings a week; and for this pittance they must rise at four on a cold, dark winter’s morning, be on their milk-walk before six, return at eleven, and after snatching a hasty meal, which they must prepare for themselves and children, go forth again on their toilsome round, labouring under a heavy yoke, to return in the evening, exhausted and hungry, finding the hearth cold, Pat at the beer-shop, the youngest child fretful, the elder sickening with the measles.

The second class consists of bricklayers’ labourers, charwomen, &c., who get an occasional job; but with one fixed principle, namely, never to work when they can beg, and if reduced to the last degrading alternative of manual labour, to do as little as possible, circumventing their employers, “jist for the honour of the thing.” These toil, upon an average, some three months in the year; for the remaining nine, hod, spade, and every article of clothing, are stowed away at the pawnbroker’s, the room being “too small intirely for the like of them.” An unexpected job, however, turns up. What’s to be done? Pat flies to the neighbour-

ing chapel, tells his tale to his "own clargy," gets the money to redeem his "implements," which in a couple of days' time are again pawned. The do-nothings, of course, form the majority of the population; you may know them at a glance. The women quarrelling, gossiping, squatting on the ground, attending to their neighbours' affairs, simply because they have none of their own; the men, too lazy to stand, lying on their faces in the sun, a short pipe in their mouths, playing cards on the pavement; or still more often in a state of beastly insensibility, sprawling under your very feet as you pick your way along.

When Norry and her charge entered the court, the whole place was astir; it swarmed like a disturbed hive, the hum of voices, screams of children, the shrill tones of the women, and the curses of the men, mingling in one deafening uproar. The "carriers" had returned; groups were formed in every direction discussing the great point of interest, namely, the "Gracians." The barrows and trucks were wheeled into the turn-court, in which Norry's abode was situated, and for the day business seemed at an end; the beer-shops began to evince tokens of life, in short, an experienced observer might discern the unequivocal symptoms of a carouse "jist to welcome the strangers."

The first floor of Mrs. Casey's "place" was let to the school; so just as she rounded the corner, her progress was arrested by a band of fresh-dismissed urchins, who, with the glee consequent on their emancipation, rushed forward whooping, bawling, screaming, at the very pitch of their lungs; striking each other with catechisms, slates, or whatever came uppermost, although

it may be remarked they were demure enough until "governess and the ladies were out of the court." There was no hurry, not the slightest ; and old Norry settled herself to talk it over quietly until the "childre' cleared the doore."

A temporary calm was succeeded by a fresh burst of the young fry, now armed with huge lumps of bread, garnished with orange-looking butter, dripping, treacle, or whatever came to hand. The possessors of the latter luxury were of course marked objects of envy to their juvenile compeers ; they gazed admiringly on the embryo aldermen, who, with smeared visages, munched away with true epicurean delight.

Amidst this tumult was one pale, sickly little thing, the very ghost of a child ; whose pallid emaciated countenance bore all the marks of a premature old age, and whose large melancholy eyes seemed eagerly seeking that love and tenderness it had never known. It too had left the school ; but poor and neglected as its companions were, it was poorer and more neglected still. Its little bare feet were bruised and dirty, its thin tattered frock hung loosely on its wasted frame ; it was hungry and sick, without spirit even to crave a morsel from its companions ; and after one or two wistful, fruitless glances, it withdrew under the shelter of a tilted cart, on which its schoolfellows were riding, and sat it quietly down. It was heart-rending to gaze on the deserted child, so still, so mournful, even so thoughtful ; and yet at so unthinking an age children reflect more than is generally imagined. And as that little deserted one rested its cheek on its hand, its meditations were of high and heavenly things ; it mar-

velled what could make the others laugh amidst dirt and wretchedness and sin ; it turned its eyes on the narrow strip of blue sky above it, and wondered if that was the heaven where its mother was ; a father it had never known, save Him whom its kind teachers taught it to address in morning and evening prayer ; and with a child's intuitive confidence in " Mary," it wished she would come and lift her up as she had seen in the little pictured prayer-book which her governess had given her. Meanwhile her earthly fate was decided ; " the woman had enough of her own, without being plagued with a brat of six years old, so it was to go to the ' house ' to-morrow." The quiet of the poor little sufferer was not, however, of long duration ; children are proverbially tyrants, and imitators of the faults of their elders ; all they themselves endure, they retaliate on their dolls, or any domestic animal over whom they may possess jurisdiction. The children of the Buildings were not, of course, more humane than others ; and when tired of squabbling between themselves, they commenced a unanimous assault on the tiny victim, who silently cowered as closely as possible under the protecting cart. Their taunts and sneers the child seemed too stupid to notice, but when dragged from her temporary shelter, she began to cry bitterly. " Take that, you whimpering bastard !" exclaimed a thick-set ruffianly boy of about thirteen, the pest and terror of the Buildings ; dealing the child so severe a blow that the blood gushed from its nose, making it scream more violently than before. " And take *that*, you good-for-nothing young scoundrel ! You'll come to the gallows yet, as sure as my name's Pat Sheehan," roared a hand-

some young Irishman, about six feet high, felling the aggressor to the ground before he knew where he was. "An' this! an' this!" he continued, bestowing one or two kicks on the prostrate coward, whose shrieks for assistance, whilst they excited the risibility of the men, awakened the ire of the boy's grandmother, who, issuing from a doorway, rushed to the scene of action, her face inflamed by drink, her grey hair streaming in all directions, and her torn and dirty cap hanging behind her head. "Have at you, Pat Sheehan! How dare the likes av you slaughter my child like a bullock?" she exclaimed, in a yell which almost cracked the ears of her auditors.

"Hould your tongue, Mother Reardon; and here, Mary, catch up the child an' be off wid you; lave me alone to dale wid the ould cat; her claws can't spile my beauty anyhow." So saying, he tenderly placed the little orphan in the arms of a pretty young woman, and drawing himself up to his full height, contented himself by evading the old dame's vigorous attacks, at first with an ironical politeness which almost frenzied her; then, giving way to his frolic-loving nature, he continued dancing round the aged fury, whistling all the while, as if to keep time with her movements. His audience, with whom Pat was a great favourite, were convulsed with mirth; and how long this scene might have continued, or to what lengths Mother Reardon's rage might have carried her, is unknown, had not an unexpected accident terminated the exploits of the principal actor. Sheehan's trousers were none of the best; and whilst capering with great agility, vaulting from the ground, striking his hands above his head, and

hooting with all his might, a loud crack was audibly heard. Pat stood aghast; then, with an exclamation something very like an oath, took to his heels, and stayed not until he had threaded the mazes of the Large House, and panting with exertion, stood before Mary and the child. "Now, Mary, that's jist what I expicted," he said, reproachfully, "and you've shamed me before the whole coort. Didn't I give you my word I'd niver pawn them agin, if you'd relase them this once? And now I must sit in the corner all day, wid your ould petticoat to kiver me, becasse I'm shamed to be seen."

"How many times have I relased thim, Pat?" inquired Mrs. Sheehan, trying to look angry. "It's the good-for-nothin' scamps you consort wid, who laugh you into anythin'. Didn't I relase them last Saturday, and send you out on Sunday clane and dacent, wid an illigant pair of boots like a jintleman? And didn't you come home widout them, looking as foolish as an omadhaun? and don't you mak' me curse and negliet me dooty, bekase I've a good-for-nothin' lazy husband, who parts all for the dhrink, and meeself out on the walk all the blessed day?" and poor Mary began to cry.

"Now, Mary, it wasn't my fault intirely; that rascal Toomey made me dhrunk, and then the boys laffed at me, and said I was undher me missus's apron like; and then I grew shamed, so I let them tak' off my beautiful trousers and boots, and they pawned them down the Hollow, and brought me home like a baste as I am, Mary. And what'll I do with this rent—you can't stitch that up at all at all?"

Pat cast a rueful glance on his fractured trousers, whilst Mary gravely answered, "I'll not redame them, Pat Sheehan, until you've promised Miss Bradshawe niver to let any livin' soul tak' them from you agin."

"Now, Mary, dear, sure you won't complain me to Miss Bradshawe?" said Pat, coaxingly; "she'll scould me intirely. Didn't I promise her to reform twinty times? and if she hadn't saved me from being flayed alive, when that brute baste of a sister of mine went to pull the skin off me chist, you'd have had no husband, Mary, that's sartain."

"No husband, indeed!" answered his pretty wife, with a coquettish toss of her head; "indeed, an' I couldn't have found a worse than I've got. But now, once for all, Pat, I'll tell of you, and there's an end of it."

Pat sat down sheepishly, without reply; and Mary, busying herself about the tea and child, soon forgot her ill humour.

No sooner had Sheehan's disappearance restored something like quiet to the turn-court, than old Norry seemed to remember Kattie, who stood by her side, a living statue of wonder, staring and listening with all her might, and yet as far as ever from knowing what it meant. Norry plucked her by the arm, and they had advanced a few paces, when a shrill voice accosted them with, "Why, Mrs. Casey, ma'am, your husband's got his discharge, poor man, from the house, and it's very ill he is intirely down below there!"

"My husband! what'll I do now, I'd like to know? An' what's to become of the child? The bed'll never hould us all, even if I eked it out wid the stall."

"What's that you're sayin', Norry?" asked the first speaker. "Is it a lodger you want to stow away? I've plenty of room, since the Sillivans got-into that little thrubble, and ——"

"I don't think your place would altogether shute, Mrs. Carty," answered Norry, significantly. "The child's a 'Gracian,' and not used to it; besides ——"

"Oh, the Sheehans lodge wid me now, and I don't do much business; I've ained nothin' to spake of lately. The clargy said so much about it, the people won't have the cards at all, and the cup don't pay to signify."

"The Sheehans lodge wid you, do they?" inquired Norry, disregarding the latter portion of Mrs. Carty's address; "well, there's room enough—that's thrue. I wish Jim had bided a while longer in the house, an' Mary'd jist have an eye afther her. How many lodgers have you new, Mrs. Carty?"

"Why, barrin' the Sheehans, there's ownly the Flannaghans, ould Biddy Sarchfield, an' them two boys of Burke's, an' Sullivan's girl, that runned away about the dance, an' blind Murphy an' his grandson, an' one Daly,—that's all; an' we've two rooms, and praps the Sheehans 'll let her bide with them, for Mary's nice about who I put in the impty bed."

"Where did Daly come from?" exclaimed Mrs. Casey, who possessed the failing of our first mother in a supereminent degree.

"He's a young fellow not long over. I think he comes from Roscrea: none on us knows him. He's bin married, but his wife died of the fever; so I suppose he's kum over to look for another;" and

the old woman fixed her little ferret eyes on Kattie.

"Better stayed at home, if that's all he kum'd for," growled Norry. "Och! I wish my stoopid Jim had stayed where he was; what'll I do wid the likes o' him here? Well, God bless you, child! May His blessed Mother and all the saints guard your bed this night! Put your beads under your head, anyhow," she added in a whisper, "an' I don't think much harm'll kum on it." So saying, old Norry shook hands heartily with the bewildered Kattie, and followed her companion with a glance in which ill-will and fear were strangely mingled.

"The ould witch! But what could I do? She knows more than's seemly for us poor sinners. Didn't she mak' the key turn in the Bible when the suv'rin was lost? and Meg Sillivan neglected the dooty iver since; for why; she tuk to havin' her fortin towld. Well, He sees all things—glory to His name!" And crossing herself reverentially, Mrs. Casey, once more gathering together her property, cautiously commenced her descent to her cellar.

CHAPTER III.

THE FORTUNE-TELLER.

THE apartment into which Kattie was introduced by Mrs. Carty was that already described as occupied by Sheehan and his wife, forming, in fact, the attic-story of the Large House, two rooms of the floor being

rented by the fortune-teller already mentioned, and by her let out ready-furnished to the persons enumerated in her address to Norry. The back room, which was so contracted that the two small beds which constituted its sole furniture almost touched each other, was tenanted by the Sheehans and "Sullivan's girl," a bold artful lass, whose days were lounged away in the court doing nothing, and who had left her parents' "place" on account of her father's strong objection to the "dance," which formed Nelly Sullivan's evening occupation, and was stretched so far into the night as on more than one occasion to compel Nell to pass the time on the stairs, until her mother went to the "walk," the paternal door being locked against her. To this the girl's companions advised her by no means to submit; and as they were warmly seconded by Florry Daly, with whom she had formed a fellowship, Nelly determined to consult Mrs. Carty, the great oracle of the Buildings. The girl's locating herself with the old woman was the result of this mysterious interview; and it soon became the current gossip, that ere long "Florry Daly and Nell Sullivan would make a match of it." 'Tis true, the wiser portion of the inhabitants shook their heads, "hoped it ud come to good;" whilst Sheehan was heard to express his conviction that "Florry was too cute to hang such a log at his heels for life." Yet, in defiance of these opinions, Daly's attentions continued in the true Irish style, teasing, quarrelling, and coaxing, until Nelly regarded him as her exclusive property, and was disposed to look with no favourable eye on any who might be so hardy as to monopolize the slightest degree of his favour.

This was the person whose couch the poor, innocent, confiding Kattie was to share, and to whom she was therefore particularly introduced on joining the group assembled round the embers of Mrs. Carty's smouldering fire. Intuitively shrinking from the reckless, repulsive countenance which met her gaze, her eyes gladly rested on that of the slumbering Mary, who, exhausted by labour, had fallen asleep on a low settle, her head leaning against the wall, and presenting as marked a contrast to her fellow-lodgers as it was possible to imagine in those of one country, almost the same town. In the mean time Sheehan busied himself nursing the child, taking his short pipe every now and then from his mouth to indulge in a deep-drawn sigh, a tribute to his recent misfortunes ; whilst two inverted fruit-baskets on either side of the grate were occupied, the one by "ould Biddy Sarchfield," the other by blind Murphy, whose grandson had not yet returned from hawking lucifers about the squares, &c., for the convenience of cigar-smokers ; from the proceeds of which lucrative trade, eked out by the old man's parish allowance of half-a-crown weekly, the pair chiefly derived their support. In one corner of the room were some five or six noisy young Flanaghans, clustering round their mother (who had just returned from a day's work), peeping into her capacious pocket and large basket to see if they contained anything edible ; for, "barrin' the half-loaf father left when he went out to look for a job, they had eaten nothin' all day." The young Burkes and Daly were off for a "spreed," so that, of Mrs. Carty's seventeen permanent lodgers (the child was not counted), five were absent, a circumstance

which caused that social hostess, as she prepared two cups for herself and Kattie, to fear "they'd have a dull evenin' of it." In this Nell Sullivan fully acquiesced; whilst Kattie, tired and hungry, silently swallowed the scraps of bread and black nauseous-looking liquid proffered for her acceptance.

"You'll like the taste of the tay bettther when you're used to it," said Mrs. Carty, encouragingly. "Why, what a Gracian the child is!"

"Wait till I get a drop of milk," said Mary Sheehan, whose pretty eyes were now opened, producing a little bottle full of a thin blue-looking liquid, which Kattie would never have mistaken for the beverage in question, although the Londoners pay for it dearly, and swallow it with avidity.

"Ah, Mary dear, ye can afford to be ginerous," leered Mrs. Carty, with a provoking significance, which roused Pat from his apathetic indifference.

"What's that you mane, Mother Carty?" he inquired, nettled by this covert attack on his wife; "it's neither just nor ginerous the likes o' you iver was, as I'm tould."

"Hould your tongue, Pat, you omadhaun, and don't be afther getting yersilf into a scrape," said Mary, with a look which her husband did not think it prudent to disregard. Mrs. Carty, who stood in some awe of Mrs. Sheehan, hastened to change the conversation.

"Who's for a little biziness to-night?" she inquired, shuffling a dirty pack of cards, whilst at the same moment she peered into an empty tea-cup. "Come, Nell Sillivan, crass me hand with silver, an' I'll tell

you your wish, an' what's past, an' what's to be, an' about the dark man, an' ——"

"Now, none of your witch doings here, Mother Carty," interrupted Sheehan. "Sure an' how can ye go to the mass on Sundays with a clane conscience, an' you acting divil-worshipper all the week?"

"You didn't call me divil-worshipper whin you were coorting Mary," answered Mrs. Carty, in what she intended for a most insinuating tone; "an' didn' I tell you thrue, Pat?"

"If you did, it was divil's work, all one," said Mrs. Sheehan; "an' he'll have you one day for your pains, Mother Carty. Didn't you rave and storm whin you got the fright tother night, and vowed you'd niver airn anither pinny, but go to the duty and live like a Christian? An' what'll the tachers of the Prodistant school in the Hollow say, about dolatry and shuperstition, when they hear the childre talk about your doings?"

"The childre have no biziness there," answered Mrs. Carty, who was sufficiently severe when the failings of her neighbours were in question. "An' that minds me, Mrs. Flanagan, I heard your husband say he'd break ivry bone in your body, if you sint the childre to the Hollow any more. There's a school for them in the Buildings, with plinty of tacin' for this warld an the nixt; and Will said it's making liars and hypercrites of them you are."

"I mint to tak them away meeself next week, plaze God," retorted the lady addressed, who was busily engaged thrusting masses of half-soaked bread into the mouth of a sickly-looking infant: "they're growin' too

big now ; and I'd be sorry they'd lose their own religion, an' git ane that's jist nothing at all in its room."

"Well," said old Murphy, for the first time joining in the conversation, "when you're as owld as me, childrin', eighty-two come nixt month, an' have been dark for twinty years, ye'll be sorry ye ivir filled the belly to pinch the sowl. Don't the Protestants shame you to your very face? don't they buy the childre from you? don't they tache them to laugh at you? don't they write books about your clargy? An' can ye blame them?—not at all! You desave the craythurs, an' are big thraitors to your own sowl into the bargain."

"You're right, Murphy," answered Biddy Sarchfield; "an' so is Sheehan about the fortin'-tellin'. Didn't Moll Carty promise Father Morgan, when he came to see me tother day, she'd niver handle a card again? Sure an it's meeself knows enuff of the power of the divil. Wasn't me first cousin, Cornelius O'Callaghan, killed by the Evil Spèerit, because he wanted to pass a runnin' sthrame, I'd like to know?"

"How was that? do tell us, Biddy!" exclaimed some five or six voices, whilst Mrs. Carty sat in sullen silence, dreading, yet not daring to gainsay the approaching tale.

"Why you see there was a witch in me native village who towld fortins (like Moll there), an' thrue enuff they came too; she terpreted dhrames, an' knew who sacked the hen-roost, an' set us all by the ears togither. Well, the good praste warned her and warned her agin; but whilst ane of us ud giv her anythin', she'd tell our fortins till the place was too hot to hould

us all. Now, as ill luck would have it, there was an owld rich farmer had married a purty young girl, a schoolmate of me own ; an the jealous fule went to have *his* fortin towld wid the rest. What passed betwixt them is unknownt ; some say there were *three* in the company, for the shadow of a fine bushy tail was seen against the wall. But the farmer grew darker an' darker ivry day, an' one fine arternoon he sthruck his purty young wife a violent blow ; it didn't kill her outright, but she drooped iver afther, an' died jist in the fall. Ivrybody blamed the witch, an' the girl's peeples thretened hard ; an' ud have been as good as their words, but she stole a march in the night, an' rid the village of herself, as we hoped. Her husband was in furrin' parts, an' it seems she was near her time ; for three days afther, as some of the boys were crassing a field jist by the sthrame, who should they see in the ditch but the witch, quite dead, wid her child by her side, an' of course it wasn't baptized. Praps it was the fright killed her ; some say she strangled herself ; however, peeples from that day went a mile round rayther than crass the rinning sthrame, unless they were properly prepared. Av coorse all who went to their duty and lived Christian lives had nothin' to fear ; they passed to and fro over the little foot-bridge, and barrin' the shadow of a white doe which flitted before them, no ill came of it : but with the ripribates it was anither thing ; they came back so mauled and scratched, an' could give no 'count of themselves, that for more than twelve months the path was quite deserted. At last my good-for-nothin' cousin, in one of his dhrunken frolics, made a bet wid his wild companions that he'd

crass the sthrame an' tackle the witch; he'd consorted oftthen enuff wid her alive, an' he was not the boy that ud fear her dead."

"An' was he killed?" inquired Kattie, who had hung with breathless interest on every word which issued from old Biddy's shrivelled lips.

"All in good time," answered the story-teller, with no small delight at the attention evinced by her young auditor. "The comrades of Corney, who were as graceless as himself, swore he'd never do it, an' they well nigh came to blows beforehand. My poor owld aunt cried an' prayed, for he was her ownly child, an' bad as he was, her ownly support too; but it was all one: the dhrink an' contradiction made him mad, an' the curses an' blasphemies av him were awful to hear. Not one that saw Corney crass the paddock that evenin' iver expicted that his would be the fut to brush the dew from the grass next mornin'. An' we were not desaved: we prayed to the Blessed Vargin all that livelong night; but he had offinded her all his life wid his sins, an' how *could* she intersade for him now? Well, to kum to an end—Cornelius O'Callaghan niver came back; an' afther a day or two, his head was seen sailin' down the sthrame, bolt upright, an' glaring ghastly enuff at us to be sure. The witch had limbed him, that's sartin'; for his arms an' legs were found by the bridge, an' brought home to his poor mother, who buried them as dacently as she could. Now av coorse this was very much talked of, an' the graceless companions of Corney began to reform; they were seen oftener at mass, an' less at the village public, but not one ud crass the bridge, an' the field was deserted.

Farmer Clooney couldn't get a man to plough it, though he offered double wages, an' ud stand a noggin of whisky into the bargain. To be sure, this put the farmer beside himself, for the field was one of his best; so he waited on the parish priest, an' asked him to be good enuff to lay the ghost. Father Derry listened kindly to Clooney's request, an' though he was an owld man an' not over strong, promised to crass the bridge afther nightfall, an' thry wud he see anythin' worse nor himself,—betther he could not, that's sartin. Well, Father Derry set out that very night; an' we young ones all followed him at a distance, takin' care to keep his track exactly. It was a bright moonlight night, an' jist as we had half crassed the field, we saw somethin' white crouching close to the ditch; this sint the life out on us. Such a screeching an' skirling as there was to be sure! Back we all ran into our own cabins, or any one's else, it was all one, an' we scarce raised our heads for more than an hour, when Father Derry came back. He had not been quite alone though. There was a sort of half nat'ral in the village, who always stuck to the good praste's heels whiniver he had a chance; an' as we were all too scared to look afther him, he had followed the whole way, an' came back safe an' sound. He was an innocent poor craythur, so praps that 'counts for it: at any rate, we didn't mind him thin, for our eyes were stuck into Father Derry. His face was deadly pale, though he was ginerally ruddy for so owld a man, and there was somethin' very sad about him when he smiled, not like himself at all.

“ ‘ God bless you, my children,’ he said, very faintly; ‘ go to rest now; the ghost 'll niver thrubble

you agin; an' may this be a lesson to you niver to forget that the law of God forbids fortin-tellin', an' shuperstitious practices of all kinds whativer.' We were burstin' with curiosity you may be sure, but none on us dared question Father Derry; an' but for the omadhaun who had followed him, we'd be none the wiser to this day. At any rate, the field was ploughed, the bridge was crassed, an' the white doe was niver seen more; but no witch iver vintured to settle agin in the village of Knockcroghery, at laste in Father Derry's time,—an' I came away jist afther he died, pace to his sowl!" Here the old woman crossed herself reverentially, and appeared for a few moments lost in deep reflection.

"Well but, Biddy," said Mary Sheehan, eagerly, "did you never hear what passed between Father Derry and the ghost? do tell us."

"That's the very best part of the story, Mary," answered Mrs. Sarchfield; "an' we'd have been ignorant of it to our dying day but for the omadhaun, who tould it in confidence to Farmer Clooney, who tould it to my mother, an' she couldn't keep it av coorse. Folks did say, howsomever, that the nat'ral was ownly putting his finger in our eyes for pastime; but we believed him: an' why not? for ——"

"But what *did* happen?" once more interrupted Mary impatiently.

"Why, when Father Derry came to the ditch, what should he see but a doe, as white—as white—as your new milk, Mary; an' when he came near, she jumped clane over and looked back, as much as to say, Folly me if you dare. The praste made no more to do, but

after her an' away ; she ran full gallop to the brink of the sthrame, jist at the fut of the little bridge.

“ ‘ You'll not crass that anyhow, my lady,' said Father Derry. An' sure enough she didn't ; for she turned bolt round, and sat upright upon her hind-feet, wid her paws crassed like a Christian, an' her large eyes glarin' in the praste's face.

“ ‘ By your lave,' said Father Derry, very politely, and he laid houl't of her by the nape of the neck, as a boy would dangle a kitten. ‘ I have you now, you vicious owld witch ; an' how dar' you torment the people, an' limb Cornelius O'Callaghan, an'——’

“ ‘ Cornelius O'Callaghan wasn't prepared, or I'd have no power over him,' answered the ghost, ‘ an' that you're ware of, Father Derry ; an' now if you'll let me go, I'll not scathe you nor yours, or——’

“ ‘ You haven't the power, so it's not to your good-will I'm indebted, ma'am,' said the praste, angrily ; ‘ an' I'll not let you go till you've given the word, that I know you daren't break, niver to thrubble these parts agin ; an' if you don't gree to that, I'll sarve you ——’ an' Father Derry whispered in its ear.

“ ‘ Now don't, don't, Father Derry,' shouted the ghost ; ‘ I'll not hurt you nor yours.’

“ ‘ That'll not do,' said the praste. An' thin there was a deal said that the omadhaun couldn't understand, till the witch screeched out as if in great pain—

“ ‘ Don't, don't, Father Derry ; I'll promise.’

“ ‘ An' you'll give me the token ?’

“ ‘ An' I'll give the token.’

“ ‘ Well, thin be quick about it,' answered he, ‘ an' thin I'll crass the bridge ; and don't let me find you

here when I return, that's all.' So saying, Father Derry loosened his hold, an' the doe stood looking at him until the father became impatient, when the ground opened an' in she popped; an' out came a purty dove, who flew three times round the praste's head, brushin' his forehead at ivry turn, and thin out of sight in a minute; an' by the same token Father Derry's beautiful countenance was whitewashed to his dying day, an' that, folks say, was hastened by the exartion of layin' the ghost."

A dead pause succeeded Biddy Sarchfield's narration, during which Mother Carty slipped away the cards and busied herself in washing the tea-cups; Nell Sullivan hung her head; and Mrs. Sheehan looked significantly at her husband. While the tale was progressing, Flanagan's baby had squalled itself to sleep, the Burkes and young Murphy had returned, and the two former now busied themselves in stowing away their wares for the night; a basket of sprats and a rope of onions were accordingly thrust under one of the settle-beds, ready to be hawked on the morrow; whilst the women began to evince symptoms of an early "retreat for the wanst." "Where's that you're goin', Nelly?" inquired Mary, as she spied the form of that young lady edging gradually towards the door, with an evident desire of avoiding observation; "it's too late intirely to be sneaking out in that manner, an' meeself an' the Gracians are tired out, I'll vinture——"

"I was ownly jist going out for a minit, Mrs. Sheehan, to——"

"To watch Daly, I suppose," answered Sheehan, anxious to reinstate himself in his wife's good graces.

"It's no go, girl, you're no mate for Florry; an' I'll tell you, Nell, if you do go out, you don't kum into that room to-night, so that's plain, my lass."

This menace, which was backed by Mrs. Carty's threatening to lock up, produced the desired effect. The picture of sullen ill humour, Nelly proceeded towards the "small room," already occupied by the Sheehans, followed in silence by the weary and spiritless Kattie. Sheehan had thrown himself down under the dirty rug, without undressing, and was already snoring audibly; Mary, having previously placed the sleeping child by his side, pushed a large box against the door. "There was no knowing, if the min were dhrunk, what ud be the upshot." She then merely removed her gown, to save time in the morning, and speedily followed her husband's example. Kate paused a moment. This was indeed the bitterest trial of her life; her eyes filled with tears as memory led her back to the small but neat chamber of her humble home. Every feeling of modesty revolted at the thought of passing the night in the same room with one of the opposite sex, even though protected by the presence of his wife; and then there were the lawless revellers, from whom she was only separated by a crazy plank, and whom even Mary, initiated as she was, seemed to fear. Was this London, the El Dorado of her thoughts, the golden city of her day-dreams? She glanced at the crazy bedstead, worm-eaten and dirty; the bundle of filthy rags spread for her accommodation, which gave fair promise of being tenanted by a busy race, who had for years flourished unmolested; but all this was literally nothing to the bold, bad girl who was to share the couch of the pious

unsophisticated Kattie, and for whom she felt an invincible repugnance,—a feeling returned with interest by Miss Sullivan, who took no pains to conceal her dislike. There was, however, no help for it now ; so, turning her back on her disagreeable companion, whose eyes she *felt* were still upon her, the girl knelt down, and, drawing from her bosom a string of beads which had belonged to her dead mother, she fervently and humbly entreated “ Mary, the comforter of the afflicted,” to intercede for her who had no earthly stay, no human friend. She thought of the stable of Bethlehem, of Mary’s poverty, and was consoled ; she thought of Mary’s happiness, and hope once more reanimated her bosom ; again, as she had done from childhood, she resolved to imitate Mary’s favourite virtues, and by humility and purity to merit the protection of her beloved patroness, and the favour of her divine Son. Alas, Kate, why were you not ever thus ? Does not the mountain violet best flourish in its obscurity, delighting by its simple loveliness, and invigorating odour, easily distinguishable from the enervating perfume of more brilliant flowers ? Yet tear it from its native shade, transplant it to a richer soil, it either withers and dies beneath the first fervid rays of an unclouded sun, or if it survives the change, loses in intrinsic worth what it acquires in lustre and beauty. Such was the type of the poor Irish girl ; vanity and self-reliance were the flaws of her mind’s jewel. No marvel, then, it was utterly destroyed when exposed in the trebly-heated furnace of temptation.

Kate Gearey’s devotion was somewhat rudely disturbed by her companion, who coarsely asked her if she meant to be playing the hypocrite there all night ?

brutally adding, "It's not *here* you'll make a count of it; try it on with the quality to-morrow; though praps it'll suit you best to turn swaddler for a time."

Nettled by the taunt, and blushing, she knew not why, poor Kate, rising from her knees, reluctantly followed Nelly's example, by slowly removing some articles of her upper clothing. Displacing her cap, she proceeded to arrange a shower of rich auburn hair, the sight of which converted Nell Sullivan's previous dislike into downright hatred; but before her object was attained, an incident occurred which rooted her where she stood, the very personification of terror and surprise. Had an Indian war-cry resounded through the comparatively quiet Buildings, its effect could not have been more electric, or its sound more appalling. Sleepers were awakened, drunks sobered, some business of enthralling interest was evidently on foot. Ere Sheehan had sprung to his feet, the slight barrier placed by Mary gave way, the door fell inwards with a crash, and the male inhabitants of the outer apartment rushed tumultuously in, eager to gain a post of observation from the window, which commanded a view of the whole Buildings. The women, less prudent or more curious, had at once rushed to the scene of action, an example eagerly followed by Nell Sullivan, and at last even by Mary Sheehan.

"What is it?" inquired Flanagan.

"What is it?" asked the elder Burke. "What is it?" re-echoed every one present; yet no one thought of volunteering a reply. A momentary pause ensued, when amongst the increasing tumult loud cries of "A deserter! A deserter!" were distinctly heard.

This was enough ; off went the men after their gentle better-halves (blind Murphy excepted), and Kate found herself and the still slumbering child the sole tenants of the little room. Our heroine, however, was a true daughter of Eve ; her first fright over, she shook back her tresses and hastened to the window, opening her clear blue eyes with unfeigned astonishment at the scene which met their view. The court had literally poured forth its hundreds, women and children not excepted, whose scanty and ill-assorted attire afforded sufficiently evident proofs that they had quitted their beds to join in the affray without bestowing any very superfluous attention on the elegancies of the toilette. A grotesque group of dames, whose charms had certainly passed their meridian, with in most cases bare legs, short petticoats, and coloured handkerchiefs tied under their chins, were strenuously exerting themselves about the centre of the Buildings, brandishing their brawny arms, dealing blows which would not have disgraced a prize-fighter, and showering a torrent of abuse in Irish on their opponents, mingled with occasional words of encouragement to some invisible object. To add to this Babel of sounds, the men, who lounged idly against the door-posts, and evidently avoided an active part in the affray, co-operated with their fair partners by clapping their hands, cheering, and giving about the same species of approbation as is bestowed by boys on a couple of snarling curs whom they are eager to bring to a "set-to" in good earnest.

The focus of attraction and mainspring of all this excitement was a body of men, whose dark-blue uniforms, bull's-eyed lanterns, and uplifted staves, pointed them

out as the national guard of England, vulgarly styled policemen. On these the warlike fair ones seemed to expend their vigour ; scratches, kicks, blows right and left, all the artillery of feminine warfare, were brought into full play. Unwilling to use their staves, the police, with exemplary patience, parried these attacks, and endeavoured to force their way towards the end of the Buildings, where the Large House was situated. It was all in vain ; a compact female mass completely blocked the way, so close on each other's heels, that to recede or advance was alike out of the question. Convinced of the impossibility of prosecuting their search, and fearful of a serious riot should the lords of the creation see fit to change their passive admiration into active participation, the police, with torn faces and aching sides, began to beat a retreat towards——street. Whilst the main body were thus employed, one of the number, well acquainted with the locality, in short up to anything, observed a something white stealing in a crouching attitude close to the walls of the houses towards the upper end of the court ; aware of the thoroughfare, the veteran silently detached himself from his companions and followed, but not so secretly as to elude the vigilance of the deserter's protecting friends.

" Save yersilf, Tim ; you're tracked ! Have at him, boys ! " were the sounds which now rent the air, awakening public attention to pursuer and pursued. Both stood erect and motionless for a second, when the latter, clearing the intervening space with a single bound, disappeared in the intricate mazes of the Large House. The policeman was not to be thus baffled ; he followed, though with a slackened pace ; the force again pressed

forward, uneasy concerning their comrade; the men suddenly woke to life, staves were now *really* used, and the battle began in good earnest.

The window at which Kate Gearey had stationed herself did not command the entry of the house, and a heavy rapid tread behind her was therefore the first intimation she received of the asylum chosen by the deserter. Turning hastily round, she observed a man panting with exertion, who, regardless of her presence, busied himself in wheeling one of the bedsteads from the wall, and who, in spite of the imminent risk in which she conceived him to stand, was literally laughing.

"I have it now," he exclaimed, shaking open the remnants of a door, which had been concealed by the displaced article of furniture; "I have it now; if any of the people are asleep, I'll jist jump over thim. Long life to the Hollow, an' I'll snap my fingers at the likes of thim. Tell the peeler not to pitch into the owld well, girl, or it'll not be good for his helth anyhow."

The disappearance of the speaker was followed by the entrance of his pursuer, who seeing no one but our heroine, naturally concluded she had been instrumental in the concealment of the fugitive. "What have you done with him, girl?" he inquired, turning his bull's-eye in every direction; "do you know you are harbouring one accused of desertion and robbery?"

Kate knew nothing about it; and without reply, turned on him a look so full of bewilderment, that the veteran was inclined for a moment to believe her as unconscious as she appeared to be. His long habits of suspicion, however, soon chased away this favourable opinion; and convincing himself the girl's stupidity was

merely assumed, he grasped her arm roughly, saying as he did so—

“Come, come, my lass, no more shams ; I tracked him to this room, and here he must be. At any rate, if he escapes, I shall take you to the station-house ; so come along.”

The violent pull which accompanied these words completed the alarm of the terrified girl ; almost beside herself, she uttered shriek after shriek with a vehemence which almost startled the policeman.

“Hold your tongue, you noisy hussy, and tell me where the fellow is,” he exclaimed in a somewhat softened tone ; but it was of no avail. Kate struggled and screamed more energetically than before, when a new actor appeared upon the scene. This was no other than Florry Daly, who, rather the worse for liquor, had followed the policeman into the Large House, and was (considering the character of the inhabitants) rather surprised at their being scared by the sight of a peeler.

The appearance of the young “Gracian” at once solved the mystery, and aroused the gallantry of Florry. The excessive, yet childlike beauty of Kattie, her alarm, which he knew to be genuine, all went to his heart, a well-aimed blow at the policeman’s arm was therefore the first announcement of his presence. The man loosened his hold, and Kate would have sunk to the ground but for the protecting grasp of Florry. The springing of a rattle was now heard in an opposite direction, whilst at the same moment Mary Sheehan and Nelly Sullivan entered, and with one voice proclaimed, “The desarter had scaped down the Hollow,

so they'd have some pace the remainder of the nite." The appearance of Kate produced an opposite feeling in the two women ; whilst it awakened every sympathy in the bosom of the kind-hearted Mary, Nell Sullivan, in whose heart every evil passion had been unlocked by the master key of jealousy, cordially wished that the deathlike swoon of the now perfectly senseless girl might indeed prove her last.

CHAPTER IV.

THE COUSINS.

ABOUT the same hour that terminated our heroine's first night's adventure in London, the last carriage rolled from the door of a mansion in Grosvenor Square ; and one of those dullest of aristocratic dullnesses, a state-dinner, was brought to a close. The spacious saloon, with its glitter of lights and all the paraphernalia of wealth and fashion, was left untenanted save by four persons, who, however widely they differed in character and appearance, were all members of one family, the head of which, the earl of Lindore, was a nobleman distinguished not only for his services in the field and senate, but for his unbending adherence to the principles of "Church and State." In his private relations none bore a more unblemished character ; he was a scholar and a gentleman. In his public career he was even more fortunate,—the organ of a powerful political party, and so staunch a Protestant as to view with grudging suspicion, and even alarm, every movement which he was pleased to term a papistical

inroad. In fact, the progress of Catholicism in England was the one bitter drop in the otherwise overflowing cup of Lord Lindore's felicity, and it was a drop of such intense bitterness as to poison the whole. Did he hear of the opening of a Catholic church, the reception of a solitary convert, his brow wore a cloud which nothing could dispel ; and he would confidently prognosticate that the time was not far distant when his native land would be tenanted by Italian brigands, when high mass would be again sung in Westminster Abbey, and the thunders of the Vatican fulminated from the precincts of St. James's.

Of course, in the earl's extensive circle there lacked not those who would foster and echo such sentiments ; nor did they confine themselves to mere words. A passion for proselytising seized the whole party ; and the destitute condition of the "Irish in London" appeared to promise a plentiful harvest to the seeds scattered in every direction by the apostles of Protestantism. A short experience, however, sufficed to convince them that the Irish were not a people adapted for conversion. District ladies were employed, Bible societies set in motion ; but the ladies were imposed upon, the Bibles pawned ; and although the commencement of a severe winter appeared favourable to their wishes, its close found all the "converts" just were they were, or rather more anti-Protestant than ever. With their offspring, at least as far as show was concerned, Lord Lindore succeeded better. Lending all his rank and influence, and what was of still more consequence, a large portion of his wealth, to the establishment of ragged schools, he began to hope that however obstinate the present generation, the next would

be indeed staunch Protestants. There was scarcely an Irish neighbourhood in London in which these juvenile soul-traps were not baited: bribes, exhortations, and all the usual machinery of orthodoxy, were tried on the parents; and where they failed, rewards and flattery succeeded in making the children at once disobedient and prematurely hypocritical. Then there were reports read in Exeter Hall, circulars issued from the City Mission, in which the grossest calumnies were propagated, the Catholic priests loaded with ridicule, and the truth and charity of the very gospel they pretended to uphold trampled recklessly under foot. Yet, somehow or other, no radical change was effected; the schools were rarely without Irish children, but they came and went, being in most cases removed by the parents directly they became old enough, as the teachers affirmed, to reap any benefit from the sound scriptural instruction they were so eager to impart. The tracts were received, but never read; the Bible-readers met with open insult, or were listened to in silent contempt; and although the committee boasted continually of the number of *ci-devant* Papists which their schools contained, they were secretly convinced of the uselessness of their efforts, as far as they went, to convert the Irish. Perhaps they were not aware of a peculiarity possessed by that nation in a pre-eminent degree, with all their faults (and I seek not their extenuation),—they ever retain a firm, perfect, and undying faith. Surrounded by poverty, by temptation, they cling to their religion as the drowning man does to a reed, and laugh to scorn any serious idea of making a “Protestant of them.” Should, by any accident (and these are the exceptions, not the

rule), one of their number really fall away, a brand as deep, as undying as that of Cain is fixed on the brow of the offender ; the most needy and friendless shun all communication with him, and the apostate is regarded with universal detestation. In his dealings with a race like this, it is scarcely surprising that Lord Lindore was exposed to repeated disappointments ; whilst even in the diadem of his domestic felicity there was *one* false gem. Six years before the commencement of my tale, his pride, prejudices, and affection had received a wound both deep and lasting.

On the evening we speak of, the various time-pieces, with their sweet musical chimes, announced eleven ; it therefore yet wanted an hour of the time when the family usually retired. The earl paced to and fro, with moody countenance and unequal steps. Lady Lindore, who rarely allowed anything to disturb her beautiful face, drew forth a net of gold-twist, and busied herself with a little bright hook, styled by ladies a crochet-needle. It was, however, to the two younger occupants of the apartment that Lord Lindore's attention seemed particularly directed, though there was certainly nothing in the appearance at least of one of them to cause the cloud which lowered on his brow. The young and lovely Lady Angela Malvern was indeed a daughter of whom any parent might be proud ; yet perhaps her vehemently English father would have been better pleased had her beauty partaken less of a southern cast. As it was, the auburn tresses, dark eyes, and clear brown complexion of Angela savoured strongly of an Italian sky ; whilst her ardent and impetuous disposition, unchecked, nay even fostered by

indulgence, caused him more than once secretly to envy the mental discipline which characterized her cousin Josephine. Take her all in all, however, a brighter or more fascinating being than Angela Malvern never flourished at Almack's, or graced a London season; and when, in addition to her numerous conquests, the close of her first spring saw the coronet of the wealthy Lord Norville laid at her feet, the triumph of Lady Lindore was complete.

Not so her father; there was something in the alliance which seemed to jar against his feelings. Yet Edgar Wellborne was his chosen friend, of his own politics and religious opinions, of an ancient and honourable descent, ten years older than Angela, and, to crown all, eminently handsome. At any rate, whatever the mystery, the countess cared not, and Angela dared not, make the attempt to penetrate it; so the usual announcements appeared in the *Morning Post*, though (as far as the definite period named) somewhat prematurely.

"Josephine," exclaimed the young beauty, shaking back her ringlets and pulling her cousin's sleeve, who, seated in a high-backed chair, was lost in a deep reverie,—“Josephine, how like a nun you look! You will run away from us some day, I'm sure.”

“I fear not, Angela; I have at present no vocation.”

“Ah! I have made you smile at last. Now, do listen;” and she threw herself on a low stool at her feet, resting her pretty head on her lap. “Papa is dreadfully cross to-night; do you know why?”

Josephine shook her head, and Angela continued—

"He was talking all dinner-time with that disagreeable Mr. Melford, I heard your name mentioned more than once; and papa said he would see into the matter, and speak to Aunt Selby, and——"

"Well, Angela, what of all this? You know I am not *very* timid; it will be time enough to defend myself when accused, will it not?" And Josephine passed her little hand caressingly through the bright curls which were scattered over her own white robe in luxuriant profusion.

"You are too brave; besides, mamma says it is not becoming in one of your age and birth to go alone as you do amongst those dreadful people."

"I am four-and-twenty, Angela, and am by no means the only errant dame."

"Yes, but you have done it for some time; I feel certain something will happen to you some day. You'll catch a fever, or be murdered, or——"

"And who will murder me, Angela?"

"Why, these Irish, to be sure; though papa says you are in no danger, for although you are English, your religion forms your safeguard. And he told Mr. Melford, that if you ventured amongst Protestants of the same class, he would not insure you from insult a single hour; but he added, that was the very idolatry and superstition of the thing, and that it is the system altogether he condemns."

"I am altogether at a loss for his meaning, Angela. If by 'system' he designates gratitude, and would prefer seeing our poor in open arms against those exemplary men who dedicate their lives to their service, and we who strive to imitate their example, I cannot admire

his code of morality, however orthodox it may sound in Protestant ears."

"Well, here he comes: now for the storm! Nay, do not compress your lips and look so very unbending, dearest Josephine." And Lady Angela glided away, throwing herself listlessly on an ottoman nearer her mother, apparently giving her whole attention to the progress of the crochet-net, though in reality devouring every syllable which passed between her father and cousin.

"Josephine," exclaimed the earl sternly, as he leant against the mantel-piece near which his niece was seated, "I am informed by my friend Mr. Melford that our very imperfect success in the — Mews school is to be attributed to you: the pupils have been either altogether withdrawn, or only allowed to remain whilst it suited the temporal convenience of their parents. There are the Toomeys, for instance: the woman promised, if we paid her score at the huckster's and allowed her coals for the winter, we should bring up the children our own way, and also that she herself would receive instructions from one of the City missionaries; and now she has the effrontery to take the children from the school, because 'the eldest is near seven, and it is time she was taught *her duty to God*.' Nor is this all: when the missionary (who, by-the-by, is a countryman of her own) called as usual to expound the Scriptures, she told him (I use her own words) 'to hold his jaw, for she meant to lead a new life, and not play the hypocrite any longer; that she was sick of hearing God's blessed Word mouthed like an old ballad; that it ought to be taught by *priests* and holy men, not by

such as him!’ Her good visitor tried to remonstrate, when she flew into a towering passion, asked him how long it was since he cast his skin; said she knew his people, and that there was not a Protestant within thirty miles of the hovel where he was born. Now, what do you say to this?”

“That the City missionary was rightly served, and that you are yourselves to blame for poor Peggy’s hypocrisy. Did you ever hear an instance of our holding out bribes to induce the attendance of Protestant children at our schools?—and we often do violence to our own feelings, by allowing the necessities of converts to remain unrelieved, lest the prospect of gain should induce them to sacrifice the integrity of their consciences, thereby disgracing the religion they profess, and destroying their immortal souls.”

“You speak strongly, Josephine, and with *apparent* candour; but why then, may I inquire, is every art employed to inveigle the children into a Popish school, which, it seems, those more zealous than prudent, and more designing than either, have thought proper to establish in — Buildings? Now, whoever may be the instigators of these *unjustifiable* measures, I am informed you, Miss Bradshawe, my own sister’s child, are one of the most unscrupulous agents in carrying them into effect.”

“To what unjustifiable measures do you allude? What unscrupulous agents do you mean, Lord Lindore?” inquired Josephine, calmly, though her usually pale countenance was illumined with a passing flush. “I was not aware St. Agnes’ School contained any

children but those not only born of Catholic parents, but baptized in that religion."

"Even were it so, Josephine," answered the earl, "what right have you, or the parents of those benighted children, to insist on their attending a Catholic school, when a good temporal education and a thorough knowledge of Protestant Christianity are offered elsewhere?"

"To say nothing of your tender care of their bodies, without which, I much fear, your Protestant Christianity would never be tolerated,—may I inquire, my dear uncle, what is your ultimate intention with regard to the education of Cyril?"

"To send him to Oxford, of course," answered Lord Lindore, somewhat surprised at a question so apparently foreign to the purpose; "and for the present to leave him where he is."

"And suppose Cyril, instead of pursuing his studies with Mr. Latimer, should insist on going to St. Edmund's College, what would you say?"

"What! at *his age*?" interrupted Lady Lindore; "the thing is quite ridiculous. Who ever heard of such a child having an opinion as to where he should receive his education?"

"Cyril is nearly twelve," answered Josephine, gravely, "and has surely as much free will as our poor Catholic children; therefore, if he wished it, I see no objection to his studying at St. Edmund's."

"What! allow my only son, the heir of my name, to become the dupe of Jesuitical intrigue and priestly domination? Josephine, you are decidedly deranged," exclaimed Lord Lindore.

"But suppose Cyril insists; you would never use

force : and he told Angela he thought he would become a Catholic, and marry me." Notwithstanding the tone of playful ridicule with which this speech was terminated, the countenance of Lord Lindore became perfectly livid.

"Rather," he exclaimed, with concentrated passion, "would I see Cyril dead at my feet, rather would I welcome my scoundrel cousin as my heir, than see my boy so lost, so degraded, as——"

"As *I* am, Lord Lindore. I thank you," answered Josephine, haughtily. "Nay, listen but one moment. Do you think, though starving, despised, and loaded with the cares of life, the poor Catholic values the salvation of his offspring less than you do, high-born and wealthy though you be? Do you think, *knowing*, as we do, that for the apostate there is no peace in this world, and the certainty of eternal torments in the next, that the Irish peasant would entail this curse on his offspring? or has it never struck you, that the prospect of future happiness becomes doubly dear by its contrast with present misery? that when pining with hunger, shivering from cold, and bent by sickness, despair must and would seize on the heart, did not that religion you so strive to overthrow teach that, by sharing the sufferings of Him alone whose path was a path of sorrow, we may hope to participate in his glory?" The eyes of Josephine filled with tears, her face glowed with emotion, and there was a lofty fervour in her tone which was not without its effect on her uncle. Passionately fond of his niece, the earl's bitterest trial in life had been what he regarded as her senseless infatuation; more especially as, by becoming a Catholic, the orphan

and almost portionless Josephine had not only broken off a splendid alliance, but had severed herself from one to whom she was attached with all the ardour of her enthusiastic nature. Of this sacrifice her aunt and cousin were ignorant; in fact, the six years' difference in age between Angela and herself had then precluded that sort of confidence in which young ladies so much delight. Somewhat softened, however, by her appeal, Lord Lindore answered, willing to change the subject—

“At any rate, there is little doubt your Catholicity has fully answered one purpose, that of estranging you from your early friends; and I cannot say it has improved the taste of the once refined and fastidious Josephine Bradshawe.”

“Nay, papa,” exclaimed Lady Angela, breaking silence for the first time, “Josephine does not really like being so much amongst these people, and she does *not* teach in the schools at all; so I think Mr. Melford has not *quite* stuck to truth.”

“Perhaps so; yet your cousin, in common with others, condescends to exert a *moral* influence over the masses of deluded individuals with whom she thinks proper to associate; and this, aided by the altar-denunciations of the Jesuit priests, must produce their full effect on an ignorant and superstitious people.”

“All priests are not Jesuits, Lord Lindore,” said Josephine, laughing outright; “and your altar-denunciations are a mere fable; of course we do not allow our children to be brought up in error if we can prevent it, upon the same principle as we should restrain them from plunging their little hands into a flaming furnace, even though attracted by the brilliancy of the blaze.”

Suppose we should imbibe your taste for proselytizing, and employ bribes, threats, and so forth, to fill our schools with your young reformers. Exeter Hall would then ring indeed, and the City missionaries would find matter for their circulars for twelve months to come."

"But you evade my question, Josephine," said her cousin. "It is *not* possible that you, whom we considered so *very* exclusive in your associates, should really like to be continually with such people."

"It is not so painful, Angela; nor are they what you seem to imagine. Poverty and vice do not always go hand in hand; there is much good amongst them; in fact, considering the temptations to which they are exposed, their comparative freedom from gross immorality surprises me; added to this, they are grateful and affectionate. In truth, their vices are those of circumstances; their virtues the offspring of religion; and I assure you the latter predominate."

"Why, Josephine, how can circumstances make them wicked?" listlessly inquired Lady Lindore, who was heartily tired of the discussion.

"My dear aunt, do but imagine your young and joyous Angela plunged without protector into the society of the idle, drunken, and dissolute; obliged to eat, drink, and sleep in one small room, with all ages and sexes; that room dirty, ill-furnished, or rather not furnished at all; with no beds, save a little straw or a few filthy rags on the floor; — do you suppose she would pass through such an ordeal as pure-minded and innocent as she now is?"

"But why *do* they live in such places?" inquired Lady Angela, naïvely.

"They have no choice," answered Josephine. "They are poor, burdened with large families, and of course are obliged to locate together in the lowest and most unhealthy neighbourhoods, where the houses are so dilapidated and old as to defy any attempt at improvement; added to which, the want of water is to the poor a serious evil."

"The want of water!" exclaimed Lady Lindore, to whom the scarcity of such an article appeared an impossibility.

"Yes, my dear aunt," answered Josephine: "there are many neighbourhoods, inhabited by hundreds of these poor creatures, where every drop of this precious element has to be brought from a great distance; and can you wonder that both parents and children remain from week to week unwashed, when the mother, after a day of severe toil, has to seek from afar the means of cleanliness?"

"And I suppose Josephine has some wise plan to remedy all these evils," said her uncle, sarcastically.

"The remedy were easy, had we but the means. We could erect neat, clean, healthy buildings, well drained and ventilated (not almshouses," she continued, smiling, "from this the national pride would revolt), where, for half the sum they now pay, a family could be lodged with proper attention to the proprieties and decencies of life; as none would be admitted but those of good character, the virtuous would no longer be exposed to the contamination inseparable from bad example, whilst the wicked would have fewer opportunities of gratifying their worst passions."

"In other words, you would erect fortresses of popery in the very heart of London," said her uncle, angrily; "really, Josephine, I believe you to be a Jesuit in disguise."

"Why, my dear uncle, have you been studying Eugene Sue?" answered Miss Bradshawe, playfully. "But it is past midnight, and Angela's pretty eyes have been closing this last half-hour."

"You do not decidedly leave us to-morrow; why not stay for a week or two?" inquired Angela, turning wistfully towards her father. Josephine looked dissent.

"Your cousin would but be sorrowful here," exclaimed the earl, with great pique in his manner; "she has entirely forgotten what she was once pleased to term her happy hours."

Miss Bradshawe could have reminded Lord Lindore of how those "happy hours" had been terminated; of the way in which she had been expelled her childhood's home, and in the zenith of youth, the very May-day of life, consigned to the cheerless abode and uncongenial guardianship of Mrs. Selby, merely for following the dictates of her conscience; and to this she might have added, that the measure, harsh as it then appeared, had been her soul's best boon; that through its means those vivid imaginations, those keen and deep affections, which otherwise would have proved her most dangerous temptation, were now directed to their proper source, rendering her an independent being, with power to control her feelings, though, alas! not without sensibility to feel. She was silent; but Angela, intent on attaining her object, eagerly repeated, "Josephine will have 'happy hours' here once more; you positively must not

go, dear cousin, for an old friend of yours desires to renew his acquaintance."

"Whom do you mean?" inquired Josephine, rather absently, whilst Lord Lindore glanced uneasily in the direction of his daughter.

"Why the other evening, at Mrs. Melford's, I was dancing with Lord Norville, and he began talking of you. He asked how it was he never met with you anywhere; told me you had been great friends when I was a little girl; and finally expressed a wish to meet you once more, if only to see if you are altered. But, Josephine, are you tired? how very strange you look!"

The conclusion of his daughter's speech caused Lord Lindore to turn hastily towards his niece. A change had indeed passed over Josephine: her complexion, naturally transparent, had assumed the whiteness of marble, whilst her lofty brow and regular features seemed to have borrowed its rigidity; the only signs of animation were in her dark-blue eyes, now almost black from the intensity of her feelings. She had risen from her seat, and her slight childlike figure was drawn to its full height; yet, whatever had thus moved, there were no signs of woman's weakness in the firmly-compressed lips, and her voice had not one tremulous tone as she calmly answered, "I am not tired, Angela."

"Then what is the matter, or rather what *was*? for you now look yourself again."

"It was your excited imagination, Angela, and the reflection of that large chandelier under which Josephine was standing," said the earl, kindly; yet there was something in his manner as if he did not altogether credit his own words.

"Perhaps so," answered his daughter, gaily. "But positively she must see Edgar; you know you will be *friends* again after our marriage."

"Are you quite sure it will ever take place, Angela?" inquired her father, in a tone which made Lady Lindore drop her crochet-needle, and hurriedly exclaim—

"What can prevent it, pray? Did you not give your consent? Is it not a match that ——"

"Well, I am no judge of a young lady's heart, if she really possesses such an article," answered the earl, bitterly; "but I sincerely hope you have not *talked* Angela into accepting Norville; for to my poor judgment she seems very much inclined to give him a rival in Charles Howard."

"I trust no daughter of mine would think of throwing herself away on a younger son," said Lady Lindore, haughtily; though the tell-tale blush on Lady Angela's cheek caused her father to exclaim, with more mildness—

"Well, my child, if you *should* change your mind, I'll engage for Norville, and not be quite so severe as your mother on younger sons either. Now, good night to you both. God bless you, Josephine." So saying, he fondly kissed his daughter's forehead; and laying his hand for a moment on Miss Bradshawe's head, closed the door after them, muttering, as he did so, something about the folly of match-making, which Lady Lindore either did not or would not understand.

The two girls ascended the stairs in silence, and paused for a moment in Angela's boudoir, which communicated with both their apartments. When about to separate for the night, Josephine took her cousin's hand, and in a tone the composure of which almost

amounted to solemnity, exclaimed, "Angela, do you really love Lord Norville?"

"I suppose I do, Josephine," answered the girl, too taken aback to dissemble; "at any rate, I have made up my mind to marry him, for mamma says I shall never get so good a match."

On entering her room Josephine closed the door, and throwing herself into an easy chair, appeared for a few moments to struggle with some violent internal emotion. Her hands were clasped, her colour heightened, her whole frame shook; still there were no tears, no yielding to her feelings, and in a few moments all was calm. Taking from her bosom a little crucifix, she kissed it fervently, then grasping it firmly between her clasped hands, threw herself on her knees. Now indeed the tears flowed; but they were sweet, calm, and soothing, such as a little child would pour into the bosom of an affectionate parent. In a short time she arose; her temptation, whatever its nature, was passed, and Josephine Bradshawe was again at rest.

CHAPTER V.

THE BETROTHED.

JOSEPHINE BRADSHAWE was the only child of Lady Mary Malvern, the twin sister of Lord Lindore, who, a few years before her father's death, had displeased her whole family by clandestinely quitting the paternal roof, and bestowing her hand on a young lieutenant in the Guards, one whose only patrimony consisted in an

ancient though decayed name, his pay being eked out by a small allowance from his aunt, Mrs. Selby. Theirs was of course a thrice-told tale : an acquaintance commenced at Brighton—love at first sight—half a dozen walks on the sands—a careless governess—an intriguing maid—until the foolish girl found herself, she scarcely knew how, an alien from her father's house, and the wife of one whose deep love too soon gave birth to undying remorse, when he became aware of the irrevocable misery he had entailed upon her for whom his very existence would have been esteemed too light a sacrifice.

Lady Mary's earnest and repeated solicitations for forgiveness were met with chilling silence : to the first alone was an answer vouchsafed. " If Lord Lindore's daughter chose to return to her father's house, he would yet receive her, on condition that her husband accepted an East-Indian appointment, and they would mutually promise never to meet again." This offer, indignantly refused, was not repeated ; and on the birth of the little Josephine, two years after her parents' marriage, the affliction of poor Bradshawe reached its climax.

Five years had passed,—years of privation, almost penury,—during which the self-reproaching husband and father unceasingly accused himself for the blindness and selfishness with which he had yielded to the promptings of passion ; he loved his wife tenderly, his whole soul was wrapt up in his child ; yet his cheek grew paler and paler, his form more emaciated, and almost before Lady Mary could realize the idea of his danger, she found herself a widow.

What, then, were her past trials ? what all she had endured ? she who had ever felt them less for her own

sake than his ; and now, as she gazed on that wan, inanimate brow, she knew her heart was broken.

Yet she lingered on, laden as it were with the cold, heavy chains of an aimless existence, her only companion her fatherless child, into whose infant mind she instilled her own feelings of resentment against those whom she resolutely persisted in regarding as the murderers of her husband. It was about this time that the sudden and accidental death of the earl secured to Lady Mary comparative affluence ; but what availed it *then* ? Scornfully did she reject every overture of her brothers ; she met him not until within a few hours of her own death, the circumstances attending which were of a nature so painful as to leave a strong and dangerous impression on the mind of a girl gifted with a susceptibility beyond her years. There was that in the deep, almost stern, grief of the young Josephine, which made her uncle shrink within himself ; and when at length domesticated within his house, her fair face, and eyes whose dreamy depths reflected every internal emotion, would so strongly remind him of his sister, as to cause him to lavish upon her even more than the affection he had entertained for the unfortunate and (as he now believed) much-injured Mary.

With every means of happiness within her grasp, surrounded by all the luxuries of a splendid home, to one differently constituted from herself, the years thus passed would have been those of unalloyed felicity ; yet, somehow or other, Josephine was not content. Lady Lindore affirmed it was her disposition ; the governess insinuated it was her uncle's indulgence ; the earl insisted they did not understand her ; and the girl

herself left them to their several opinions without vouchsafing any explanation.

In short, the young orphan had, ever since her residence amongst them, been a problem to the whole family. Inconsolable for her mother's loss, it was some time before her attention could be in the slightest degree diverted, or her grief moderated; and as the countess considered passive acquiescence all that was required of her, the task of consolation devolved on her uncle and Miss Pomroy, the governess engaged on her arrival. Anxious to atone for his neglect of his now deeply regretted sister, Lord Lindore heaped more than a parent's tenderness on her child; who, as she was generally considered as his adopted daughter, was spared the nameless petty trials usually so keenly felt by those who fill a subordinate situation. There were also in the earl's household one or two old servants who remembered her beautiful mother; and by them the faults of Josephine's character were carefully fostered, with a most laudable inattention to the child's future happiness.

Until her thirteenth year, the contests between herself and governess were of daily occurrence. Gifted with a wonderful memory and deep reflective powers, Josephine would only study what and how she pleased; but when at length she peremptorily refused *wasting* further time with either her music or dancing master, the consternation of Miss Pomroy knew no bounds. In a long interview with Lord Lindore, she expatiated on the obstinacy of his niece—the effects of her bad example on the young mind of Lady Angela—winding up with such a high-wrought picture of the evils which

must accrue from her own violated authority, that her auditor could scarce refrain from laughing outright.

“Miss Bradshawe has such a very strong mind, such peculiar religious opinions, that really Miss Pomroy was not at all times able to satisfy her; and if Miss Pomroy’s advice was asked, she should be inclined to fear, that, notwithstanding her very orthodox bringing up, Miss Bradshawe would soon have no religion at all.” This settled the question; come what might, the earl was resolved every member of his family should be staunch Protestants; and, much to the satisfaction both of Josephine and her governess, the latter was ordered to confine her instructions solely to Angela, the former to pass a certain number of hours daily in her uncle’s library.

There was much in this arrangement flattering to the self-love of both master and pupil. Indifferent, nay, disdainful, in her demeanour to all else, Josephine evinced a decided affection for her uncle, and would cheerfully yield to his will, when it jarred with her own inclinations. She, however, possessed one characteristic, which had even attracted the observation of the apathetic Lady Lindore: from her first introduction into the family, Josephine had evinced a decided distaste to female society; a prejudice which had gained ground with her years, and of which poor Miss Pomroy was destined to feel the full effects. Thus the infant Cyril occupied a large portion of her attention, whilst the prattling and engaging Angela was unheeded. The earl, who was of opinion that the early loss of her mother had soured a too sensitive nature, would not allow her, even on this point, to be thwarted, and eagerly prepared himself for a task, which he mentally

offered as a reparation to the shade of his lost sister. It, however, brought its own reward; the branches of literature chosen by her uncle were exactly those in which Josephine most delighted. To a capability for hard study she united a dangerously vivid imagination, strength of mind amounting to obstinacy when once her resolution was taken, and yet a fluctuation before she did decide, which was by many mistaken for feebleness of purpose. Under a cold exterior she carefully concealed ardent and deep affections; in fact, though conscious of their existence, she regarded them as useless, and her early experience of human nature being widely at variance with the ideal enshrined in her heart, the possibility of their being awakened into activity by any whom she was ever likely to encounter, never once occurred to her. If Josephine had no taste for music, it was not so with poetry; hour after hour would she pour over the pages of Tasso, until her own existence was almost forgotten in one, the offspring of the poet's magic strains; in fact, but for that "religious curiosity" condemned by Miss Pomroy, Josephine stood a fair chance of becoming a wild, enthusiastic visionary.

Content as he was in other respects, on this point Lord Lindore found much to do and undo. His niece had been duly versed in the Church Catechism; taken to a fashionable West-end chapel every *fine* Sunday morning; compelled to recite an alternate French and English grace; and being of an inquiring turn, had moreover received ample doses of Miss Pomroy's private experiences of Popish practices, accompanied by authentic anecdotes from that young lady's personal knowledge during a six months' residence on the continent, all of

which tended to confirm her own opinion, that "a worshipper of Moloch was in every respect a better Christian than a Catholic, and the Koran a work, she would venture to state, containing more of the vital principles of Christianity than a Roman Missal, though, she was proud to say, she was equally ignorant of both."

As the light summer-breeze on the calm surface of the unruffled lake did all this pass over the unprejudiced mind of Josephine; and the earl found with surprise, that although his niece had not the slightest bias in favour of the Church of Rome, she was equally free as regarded the Church of England. She had been all her life a great Bible reader, more for the sake of the poetry she gleaned from the pages of the Old Testament, and what she was pleased to style the sublime moral philosophy of the New, than from any devotional feeling. To please her uncle, however, she recommenced her theological studies, waded through these heavy works on the subject with which his library abounded, gradually discontinued all her religious exercises, absented herself from the church-going party, and came to the conclusion, that since the Gospels were written by men who existed fifteen hundred years previous to the establishment of the English Church, and that according to the doctrines of the reformed religion error had crept in, thereby falsifying the promise written in the inspired pages, the whole must want the stamp of divine revelation. Of Catholic doctrines she was profoundly ignorant; of Protestant she knew all that was to be known, and one by one she dismissed these latter as untenable; so that, after a few years of deep study and painful uncertainty, Josephine Bradshawe became a confirmed Deist.

This was a severe shock to her uncle; but he consoled himself by reflecting it might be worse—time would work wonders—she was still very young, and his influence over her mind was unbounded. Yet, alas for Josephine! the peace she had expected from her new, or rather her want of, belief, was more remote from her bosom than ever: devoid as she considered herself of prejudices, she believed still in the moral certainty of a future state, and the necessity of a revealed religion. But where was it to be found? Her brain became a chaos; she thought of death and trembled. *If she should be mistaken?* Ah no! she was right, or why was the reformed religion split into so many sects, each loudly condemning the other? She knew not to whom to apply for advice and consolation. To a Protestant clergyman? None such could point out anything of which she was not already aware. A Catholic priest? it was worse than useless. Her agony increased; she would start from her sleep, quit her bed in the dead of night, and on her knees, with streaming eyes, pour forth an earnest prayer, that if there were indeed a revealed religion, she might be taught to know it, and that once known, she might embrace it at any sacrifice, even though the penalty were life itself; and then in the desolation of her self-reliance she would implore that one might be sent to lead her to the truth she so strenuously sought, and to him she would bow her proud will, and obey with that child-like docility which as a child she had never practised.

This mental anguish was not without its physical effect on Josephine: she became thin, pale, restless in her manner; there was an occasional lustre in her

dark-blue eye, and a hectic tinge on her cheek, which made Lord Lindore dread lest the seeds of the fatal disease which had destroyed the mother lurked in the frame of her still more tenderly beloved offspring.

Seriously alarmed, and blaming himself for having overtaxed her mental powers, the earl consulted with his wife; and it was decided that, in order to effect an entire revolution of ideas, Josephine should be brought out the following spring, being six months before she had attained her eighteenth year. An event, however, occurred before this period which materially altered the views of all parties.

Edgar Lord Wellborne was the only son of an ancient and wealthy peer, a college friend of the earl of Lindore's, who in consequence lavished on the young man himself no inconsiderable share of affection: this was no doubt occasioned by the partiality evinced by Edgar for his society, and the hours passed by the latter in the earl's library became matter of profound speculation to match-making mammas or dowagers with marriageable grand-daughters. It was of course not long ere these inquisitive fair ones discovered, that in addition to Lord Lindore's invaluable black letters, he possessed a more powerful magnet in the person of his blue-eyed Josephine, who studied with and argued against Lord Wellborne, until the latter was head-over-ears in love.

The religious peculiarities, of which she made no secret, alone caused him to hesitate; but even these melted as snow before the danger of allowing her to pass the ordeal of her first season free to be sought and won. Matters were, therefore, arranged long before the eventful spring; and Edgar Wellborne was received

by the earl as the future husband of his niece; their confidence did not, however, for the present extend to the countess, who would have been shocked by so gross a violation of fashionable etiquette as engaging a young lady before her introduction.

And for a time Josephine was happy; the unknown yet ardent aspirations of her woman's heart, the golden day-dreams of her glowing imagination, were realized; there was in Edgar's character much which assimilated with her own, and more to be respected and admired; so, without a moment's hesitation, she set about the task of moulding her disposition to that of him to whom she had yielded her whole soul, and who, with a girl's romantic and all-absorbing love, she regarded as the future master of her destiny. For a time it even appeared as if she might be brought to adopt his creed merely because it was his: the colour re-visited her cheek, the smile hovered round her lip, the intensity of her new-found felicity gleamed from her eyes; happy herself, she sought to make others so, and, from the playful Angela to her stately mother, all declared Josephine to be an altered being. Yet was not her conscience altogether quiet: again and again would she be assailed by doubts and scruples, again and again were they checked by the counter-thought of Edgar; the love of the Creator was merged in that of the creature; and although Josephine Bradshawe was neither accused of "worshipping picture or image," her heart was the temple of idolatry in the truest acceptation of the term.

It was in vain, however, that she endeavoured to persuade herself to attend once more the Protestant form of worship. Here even affection became power-

less ; she could not and would not act the hypocrite. About this period the illness of his father compelled the temporary absence of Lord Wellborne ; and Josephine, left to herself, had once more time to think ; that ever-troublesome conscience was again aroused, and again did she determine to study : but how ? where ? One evening, whilst searching in the library for some thrice-read book, an old volume covered with dust fell at her feet ; opening it mechanically, she started with surprise,—it was a French work, written by Des Mahis, professing to prove the *Catholic religion* from the holy Scriptures.

The Catholic religion ! probably the only one of which she knew literally nothing, certainly the last in which she would have anticipated finding that peace which had so frequently eluded her grasp ; with hurried fingers and a fluttering heart she turned over a few pages, then, bearing the book to her own chamber, secured the door, and sat down to devour its contents. The first chapter riveted her attention, and it was now that Josephine's previous studies stood her in good stead ; she had no prejudices, her mind was as a sheet of fair unsullied paper, and as she read on, though her bosom throbbed, and her brain reeled, conviction was written on that mind as indelibly as though with an adamantine pen.

It was considerably past midnight, when, throwing the volume from her, she clasped her hands, and raising her eyes, humid with tears, exclaimed, in a tone the agony of which proclaimed her inward trial—

“ My God ! my God ! is it possible. Am I, can I be, a Catholic ? ” She sank upon her knees, and oh !

for the hour's anguish which ensued; wildly, and in her blindness did she pray, that if it *could be so*, she might not be called upon to embrace that faith which in her case must entail a perfect martyrdom of self, a relinquishment of all most prized. Yet never for a moment did Josephine intend to falsify her conscience; like the favoured disciples, once called, she was ready to leave all and follow Him.

A month after this eventful night Lord Lindore sat alone; a heavy volume lay spread before him, but his eyes wandered over the pages without his mind retaining a single line of its contents. He was ruminating on the late strange conduct of his niece, assigning to himself every possible or impossible reason for the sudden alteration in her manners and appearance; to his anxious questionings she had opposed an unbroken silence, and but for letters he had himself received, he would have assigned some quarrel between herself and Wellborne as the probable cause. Yet Josephine (and her uncle knew it) was not one to fritter away her happiness for a caprice; and the more he ruminated, the more involved in mystery became the whole affair. A light touch on his shoulder aroused him from his reverie; and turning hastily round, he beheld the object itself standing by his side.

"Do I disturb you?" she inquired, in that low tone of forced composure more expressive of the soul's struggles than the most passionate intonations; "I wished to speak to you on a (to me) most important subject."

"For Heaven's sake, what is the matter, Josephine?" inquired the earl, positively startled by the strong resemblance her countenance bore to that of his sister

when he had last beheld her. "You will drive me mad by this unaccountable conduct. Are you ill, my child, or unhappy?"

"I will not keep you in suspense, dear uncle; it can answer no purpose, as my mind is now made up: in one word, I am resolved on becoming a Catholic."

Had the earth suddenly yawned beneath his feet, or a bolt from heaven entered the room where he sat, Lord Lindore could not have been more surprised, more shocked, than by these few words: his face grew purple, his mind confused, and his voice was literally choked by concentrated passion. A few minutes succeeded of ominous silence, while, shading his brow with his hand, he pondered the words he had just heard; too well acquainted with his niece's unbending character to suppose that, if her resolution were really taken, *he* had power to alter it, he determined to leave the task to him who had the greatest hold on her affections, hoping that in her case, as in many others, the heart would prove too powerful for the conscience. Taking her hand, and retaining it with something more of anger than affection, he coldly answered: "I know you too well, Josephine, and that wilfulness of disposition which you style firmness, to endeavour to shake your resolve, if it indeed *be* taken; yet, although in other respects I have allowed you perfect liberty of conscience, you are of course aware that, by becoming a Catholic you estrange yourself from my bosom and roof for ever. I could forgive much in Mary's child; yet a step like this both my principles and position forbid me to regard otherwise than with feelings of unqualified displeasure. Nay, hear me out; until Lord Wellborne's return, this

subject is interdicted between us ; to *him* make known your final determination, and either prepare at once to become his wife, or remove to the residence of your father's aunt, Mrs. Selby, to whom I shall allow an adequate sum for your proper maintenance." So saying he released his grasp, and, without waiting a reply, arose, and with a slow and stately step quitted the apartment.

Autumn had deepened into winter ; it was about eight o'clock on a dreary December evening that Josephine entered the spacious library of Malvern House, and almost unconsciously assumed her usual seat in a heavy carved-oak chair, which seemed coeval with the building itself. The lamps were unlighted, but the blaze of a large cheerful fire rendered surrounding objects visible, yet, with that flickering indistinctness which allows full play to the imagination, causing them to assume a thousand fantastic shapes. This was Josephine's favourite hour ; and as the bright flames played on her rich dark robe and pale countenance, now illuminating it, now leaving it in shadow, it required no great stretch of fancy to invest her with the attributes of some enchantress, at whose bidding quaint forms and unearthly beings peopled that ancient room. For herself, she thought not of external objects ; there was matter enough within to engross her full attention, and henceforth every power of her mind must be bent to combat the temptation which she knew to be inevitable : the die was cast,—that very morning had Josephine Bradshawe been received into the bosom of the Catholic Church, and (for she deceived herself not) the sentence of eternal separation been pronounced between Edgar

Wellborne and herself. Though her heart was wrung with agony, there was a peace within her soul which defied her utmost skill to analyze; yet her frail nature, unschooled in endurance, actually writhed as she thought of the one bitter trial—the parting from her cherished dream of happiness: a dream dearer from its very loneliness; the future prospect she dared not, could not, contemplate. The first seed of humility had, however, fallen into the young convert's soul. She, so proud, so unbending, so self-relying, actually feared herself; felt her own weakness, and sought for aid, where it is never sought in vain. How long this train of thought continued she knew not; heedless of the lapse of time, she mused on, until a hurried tread causing her to turn, she beheld the very person who at the moment engrossed her every thought, Edgar Wellborne! Starting to her feet, she uttered a low cry, and for a moment trembled so violently as to be able to support herself with difficulty.

“Josephine, my own Josephine!” he exclaimed, “I am returned at last. But why did you not write? have you been ill? how very thin and pale you look!”

“My head aches,” she answered, absently, pressing her hand to her forehead, with a look of such painful bewilderment as to awaken a thousand alarms in the bosom of Lord Wellborne.

“But are you not glad to see me? My love, what is the meaning of all this? Something must be the matter, you are so changed.

“I am indeed changed, Edgar,” said the poor girl, with a violent effort to recover her composure; it was, however, useless, and, laying her head on his shoulder,

she gave way to a violent burst of tears. This display of emotion, so unusual in Josephine, completed Wellborne's surprise. Whilst with one arm he supported her sinking form, he with the other forcibly raised her head, and, throwing back the clustering curls, gazed long and searchingly in her face. Evidently there was something in the scrutiny which displeased him, for his colour heightened, and an expression of painful doubt flitted athwart his countenance, as he inquired in a tone bordering on severity—

“Josephine! Miss Bradshawe! I will be answered; once more, what is the meaning of all this?”

“I cannot, dare not tell you now,” she replied, in a voice choked by sobs; “give me but a week, a day, and you shall know all.”

“Then there *is* something to tell; and do you think I can pass a night in suspense like this? But I will save you the trouble of a disagreeable avowal; my absence, short as it was, has proved too much for your fidelity,—in one word, you are false!”

This accusation had an instantaneous effect in recalling Josephine's self-possession; extricating herself from him, she returned his indignant glance by one of sorrowful determination, and replied with greater calmness than she had yet manifested—

“Your own heart will be my best extenuation. Yet your words are in some degree prophetic; this meeting will, in all human probability, be our last; at any rate you shall know the worst; but mark me, Edgar, I *have* borne, *can* bear much, but not from you; leave me, but do not upbraid me!—I am a Catholic!”

The expression of her speaking eye, the thrilling agony of her tone, carried instant conviction to his

heart. Sinking into the seat she had quitted, he buried his face in his hands, and as the strong mind wrestled with its agony, he groaned aloud. It was now Josephine's turn to console; alarmed at his speechless anguish, she knelt by his side, and endeavoured by every term of endearment to win him from his grief; at length she succeeded, but his tones were so hollow, when he did speak, that she trembled.

"Is the step irrevocably taken?"

"Irrevocably! and dear as you still are, I do not wish it otherwise."

"Then, Josephine, hear me;" and he took in his own the clasped hands of the still kneeling girl. "You know the deep-rooted prejudices, the sound Protestant principles, of both your family and mine (prejudices and principles which I entertain and cherish as deeply as any whose name I bear), but you do *not* know the strength of my love, you cannot tell how closely every better feeling of my nature is entwined with yours; had you felt thus, you had not acted as you have. Yet one moment, and I have done. I seek no vindication of your motives. My father now lies on his death-bed; as my wife, I offer you the free unconditional exercise of the religion you have thought proper to embrace, and may this be henceforth the only prohibited topic between us."

Surprise, and, for a moment, a feeling of the purest joy, of reawakened hope, thrilled through the frame of Josephine; but some after-feeling sent the crimson torrent from her cheek, and left it more pallid than before; she hung her head, and the hands Lord Wellborne still retained became cold and clammy in his grasp.

"I have not quite finished," he continued, as though

her emotion had escaped his notice : " I know the exacting nature of the Catholic Church ; all I can concede I will ; that child on whom my name and titles may descend must be reared in the faith of his ancestors ; for the rest, do as you will ; and if I err, may God forgive me."

This was, indeed, Josephine's hour of trial. To reproaches, even to a final separation, she had steeled her heart, in fact she had considered both as inevitable ; but for this unprecedented generosity, this deep devotion, she was unprepared, and in her agony she half-audibly exclaimed, " O heavenly Father, let me not be tempted above my strength ;" and strength was given her, the strength of the Sacrament she had that day received ; her face beamed with grateful affection, as, pressing her lips gently on the hand of Lord Wellborne, she softly murmured—

" I cannot perform my duty by *halves*, nor dare I accept such a sacrifice from you, prompted as it must be by motives purely human. Edgar, my own Edgar, we must indeed part ; yet, believe me, even this moment's anguish is outweighed by the knowledge I have acquired of the priceless value of that treasure which I must now resign for ever."

She gently extricated her hand ; but Wellborne, giving way to jealous anger at what he regarded as her cold-hearted adherence to a mistaken sense of duty, sprang from his seat, and impetuously exclaiming, " Then, indeed, farewell for ever !" rushed from the room.

A few short days and Josephine found herself an inmate of Mrs. Selby's abode, and the unconscious victim of a brain-fever.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DISAPPOINTMENT.

LISTLESS and dispirited did Kate Gearey arise the first morning after her arrival in — Buildings. Mary was already on the “walk,” whilst Pat Sheehan and Nell Sullivan snored in concert. Hurrying on her clothes, she timidly opened the door of communication leading to the large room, though here matters were still worse. Moll Carty and blind Murphy owned the two “sittles” (the former for a just compensation shared hers with Biddy Sarchfield). The Flanaghans crouched and sprawled in every direction, on a ragged mat eked out by the contents of a sack of woollen rags, which the family had undertaken to pick for the trade, and which meanwhile served to “kiver the childre.” Florry Daly was already abroad; and the Burkes, eager to follow his example and effect an escape from the pestilential atmosphere, were endeavouring to extricate their merchandise from under the bed occupied by Mrs. Carty. It was, however, so closely wedged, as to render this feat impossible, without disturbing their landlady’s half-finished toilet, a liberty highly resented by the good dame, who began a remonstrance neither remarkable for the elegance of its diction, or the sweetness of the tones in which it was delivered.

“Bad cess to you, Jack Burke, an’ what’s it the likes of you manes, shovin’ the bed in that way, an’ me on it too? did you think it was a sack of wheat you was handlin’, I’d like to know?”

“More like a sack of chaff, I’m thinkin’,” growled

the gentleman addressed ; “but stir yer owld stumps, Mother Carty, and let me get the traps ; you know warehouse-room was included for half a crown a week ; an’ if I don’t haul the sprats out of this divil’s hole, they’ll stink sure enuff before I’ve sould thim.”

“Spake to yer mother, you villin ! spake to yer mother !” vociferated Mrs. Carty, shaking her clenched fist, and yelling like an infuriated beast ; “you’ll never comb grey hairs, you gallows-bird, an’ you’ll niver respect them, ayther.”

“Hould yer clack, you owld cat, and don’t be hootin’ there, like an owl larnin’ a glee ; you’d frighten a horse from his oats, you ugly hag, an’——”

“Me ugly ! me ?” shrieked Moll, beside herself with passion, and, forgetful of the peculiarity of her costume, she sprang from her seat, intending to commence a murderous attack on the countenance of young Burke, when her wrath was suddenly transferred to another object.

The whole scene had been too much for the risible faculties of Kate. The spare form of Mrs. Carty had never appeared to such advantage, set off as it was by a very short petticoat, with the hood of an old cloak, by way of nightcap ; she stood brandishing her arms in every direction, hitting about her without any definite aim, and uttering treble notes of sufficient power to quickly enlist a chorus of young Flanaghans, who contributed every variety of intonation to the already deafening concert.

As the call of the Swiss hunter is heard amidst the wildest raging of the tempest, so did Kate’s musical laugh penetrate to the old woman’s ears, diverting her

attention to a safer, because a weaker, antagonist. Pausing in full career, she placed her arms a-kimbo, and foaming with passion, exclaimed—

“Well, I’m sure! *you* laugh at me, do you? That’s the manners you’ve brought wid you, is it? Praps this’ll larn you anither time, an’ make you grin the other side of yer mouth.” So saying she caught up a rag, which Mrs. Flanagan had left soaking all night in a broken pan, and which constituted a considerable portion of her week’s wash, and dealt poor Kate a blow across the lower part of the face. Surprised and writhing with pain, the girl burst into tears; a circumstance which gave unqualified delight to Mrs. Carty, who found herself victor of a fray, in which a few minutes before she had feared a signal defeat.

“Ugh! bad scran to you! I’ve made you change yer note, have I?” she continued, though with diminished violence; “praps it’ll tache you bether next time.”

“An’ I’ll make you change yours, you owld witch,” said Florry Daly, who, ready for his breakfast, had entered unperceived in the confusion; “see how you’d like a taste yersilf, this fine mornin’;” and seizing her in his powerful grasp, he shook the woman until she was black in the face, ending by pitching her on the bed. “Now I’ll tell you all a bit of my mind.” Glaring as he spoke from his prostrate foe to Nell Sullivan, who, lazy as she was, had contrived to crawl to the scene of action: “If any o’ you touch this girl, I’ll thry how the print of my ten fingers shutes yer countenances; an’ don’t *you* forget it, Nell.”

This menace had for the time the desired effect. Mrs. Carty gathered herself up, and slipping into an old

gown, commenced raking together the remains of last night's fire, which, with the addition of a little coke, and a few shavings from the heap in the corner, was kindled to boil the kettle for her lodgers, this being a part of her bargain. Kattie, still sobbing, sat down in a corner ; and Florry, who seemed destined for her champion, after vainly endeavouring to coax her into good humour, retired into his own peculiar nook, and engaged in earnest conversation with the elder Burke, whilst the younger carried the sprats to the pump, "jist to run the wather through thim, and make thim all right afther the nite."

Once, and once only, was Florry heard to exclaim, "It's well worth our while ; those that win the goolde shall wear it ; an' if you don't like it, Jack, why there are plenty more." The rest was inaudible, even what was said seemed unheard save by old blind Murphy, who crossed himself, as was his invariable custom when anything displeased him.

Since Daly's rebuke no word had been spoken by Nell Sullivan ; after exchanging with the fortune-teller a look full of terrible meaning, she withdrew to her now untenanted sleeping apartment, and, seated on the side of the bed, brooded darkly on plans which would have disgraced any but a demon.

Whatever might have been the feeling with which Florry Daly had hitherto regarded her, she saw plainly that all it had of tenderness was usurped by the young stranger. With bitterness, and something like shame, she contrasted herself with her simple, innocent rival ; nor could she blame Daly, however guilty she might be, for *he* had not made her so. Nelly was not

one to indulge in impotent jealousy ; she held or fancied she held the game in her own hands, and mentally determined to win it ; without compunction as to at whose cost. Her course was promptly decided on ; eagerly waiting the opportunity of consulting her worthy adviser and confidante, Mrs. Carty, she returned to the large room with an apparently careless forgetfulness of what had passed, assisting the latter to prepare the breakfast, and as herself and Kate were boarders, she pressed the young "Gracian," with a rough kindness, to partake of the meal. Daly might not have been deceived, but he had gone out with the Burkes, and in a short time the morning's storm seemed remembered only as an event of hourly occurrence.

"If any of the childre see Miss Bradshawe in the Buildins, jist tell her I want her," said old Biddy Sarchfield, looking very mysterious, and hemming so as to attract universal attention.

"An' what's it you want?" inquired Pat Sheehan, rather uneasily, for he dreaded the tale of the trousers, should his wife encounter Josephine.

"I'll not live long," answered Biddy, "an' there's a weight on me mind: I'd like to be put in the grave dacently, an' me best bonnet an' shawl are in pawn this three years, an' I'd like the money to relase them for the wake, that's all."

"Balderdash!" said Pat, impatiently. "You don't mane, Mother Sarchfield, it's in a bonnet an' shawl you'll be put in your coffin?"

"An' why not, I'd be glad to know? Sure it's a famerly wakeness. I'll jist tell you what happened me mothers' brother's childre."

"You seem to have quare relations," replied Moll

Carty, in whose mind last night's conversation still rankled, "an' I'd not brag of them if I were you."

"Well, brag or not brag, it's thrue as gospel," exclaimed the old woman, testily, who, it may be observed, was an inveterate story-teller, and would chatter away without much regard to the patience of her listeners. "My uncle's two girls married two brothers, worse luck, an' they both died before a year was out, one the day after the other; an' in coorse it's an evil eye many cast on the mother-in-law! Well, whin they left their father's they both had beautiful new cloaks: the cloth had been spun at home for the weddin', an' illigant it was, that's sartain. Now when the wake kem, it was noticed amongst the neybour's that one sisther had on her fine warm cloak, whilst the other was shiverin' in a shroud, an' it winther too. People blamed the mother-in-law; an' thrue for her, she had kept the cloak, an' grudged the other too; but the husband was generous, an' wouldn't lave it her."

"Well, the funeral was over, an' the owld skinflint went to mass next Sunday wid the garmint kivering her bones, jist as if it was spic an' span new; but small pace had she in it, for it was twitched off her showlders all the way to an' fro, an' not a breath of wind ayther; at nite it was worse, for, jist as she was in her first sleep, who should she see but a couple of ghosts, istandin' at the fut of her bed, both shiverin' an' shakin' undher the one cloak, which wouldn't half kiver them, an' bullying her to give up the one she had stolen. They kicked up a hullabulloo all nite, an' the poor woman couldn't sleep a wink; but she dhreaded losing the cloak over all things, an' lest the speeruts

ud sarch her chists, she crammed it undher her bolster, an' wint to rest next nite detarmined to be even wid them. They were there quite punctual, an' smelled out the stolen property soon enough; so they both wint together, first on one side, then on the other, tuggin' an' pullin', their four eyes glaring like saucers, their two heads stuck undher one hood; but the owld woman was a tough un, an' wouldn't give up the cloak. This wint on for a month or more, ontill the mother-in-law, who niver had a wink of sleep all the time, consulted wid Father Derry, an' he advised her to giv' up the property: sore sorry was she to do it, but there was no help for the same; so that very nite—it was a holy eve too—she sat bolt upright in the bed, an' bided the coming of her daughters-in-law; in they stumped, stuck close together as usual, an' terrible angry they were; they rattled their chains, as I'm tould, an' spit flames over the coverlet, till the owld woman screeched out,—

“ ‘Musha! Anne dear, what's it you want?’

“ ‘I want my cloak, you tundering owld thief,’ said the ghost, spaking very loud an' sevar; ‘an' I'll have it too, or I'll shake your crazy carcase to a jelly.’

“So they both began pullin' the bolster as usual, but wid such screechings an' noises, that the mother-in-law was scared out of her wits.

“ ‘There, tak it, you ungrateful hussy!’ an' she dragged it out from undher her head, an' pitched it at the speeruts; but her courage oozed out of her tin toes, an' jumpin' on the floore, she gave leg-bail to the ghosts, an' niver went into that room agin. Howsomever, she didn't live long herself; an' the house was thrubbed iver after.”

Whether it was the company were not in so good a humour, Biddy Sarchfield's story was far from as well received as that of the previous evening; indeed by most it was considered as trumped up for pecuniary purposes of her own. Sheehan merely inquired,—

“An' what's all that to do wid you, Mrs. Sarchfield?”

“Why, Pat dear,” answered the old woman, coaxingly, “I'd not rest in me grave widout I was waked in me bonnet an' shawl; an' if I don't have thim, I'm fear'd I'd thrubble the pawnbroker,—an' sure it ud not be respectable for me, poor ghost, to be seen waithin' all day in the shop down there, instead of keepin' quiet in the churchyard; an' I kum of dacent people too.”

“An' it's not much you'll be aftaer gettin' by that,” exclaimed blind Murphy. “Doesn't Father Morgan talk agin the wakes, an' prache agin the wakes, an' don't all the clargy say it's haythenish shuperstition, to be smokin' an' dhrinkin' an' singin' an' fightin' in the sight of the corse? an' didn't Miss Bradshawe say it ud be more Christianlike if we prayed for the poor sowl that was gone, instead of offending God, an' we not knowin' who'd be next.”

“An' do you mind,” said Sheehan, “what happened at the wake of Toomey's mother? How Dick Reardon got so roarin' dhrunk as to pull the coffin at top on him; and didn't Father Horton say thin, we should niver have another penny till the corse was undher ground.”

The entrance of Mary Sheehan put a stop to the conversation; and as part of the company had dispersed, Kate took an opportunity of consulting her as to the way in which she was to proceed in order to obtain the situation, to which she looked forward as the means

of releasing her from her present irksome position. The good-natured Mary, who really felt for the poor girl, faithfully promised to inquire at all the houses she served, meantime advising her to go herself the round of the shops, and take her "discharges" with her.

Kate washed her face, tied on her bonnet, and grasping the good priest's character tight in her hand, set out; duly cautioned by Mrs. Sheehan not to be shamefaced, and above all, not to lose her way. This latter was a necessary precaution, as Kate knew not one single yard of London. She was, however, young and adventurous, but fearful of forgetting the name of the court where she resided, she continued repeating it to herself in an audible tone until she found herself in Oxford Street. Although early spring, it was a miserable afternoon. A small drizzling rain descended without hope of intermission; the pavement was covered with a black unctuous matter, rendering it so slippery as to peril neck and limb of the inexperienced pedestrian; omnibuses, carts, and cabs were hurrying in every direction, rendering the crossings unpassable, at least to Kate, who, on seeing women and girls of every age not only intrepidly threading the labyrinth of vehicles, but arriving safely on the opposite side of the wide street, positively stood still with wonder, thereby becoming entangled in the masses of locomotive umbrellas by which the footpath was obscured. As a matter of course, she received numberless pushes, thrusts, and in many cases curses, for "sticking in the way like an idiot;" and her humble "Beg pardon, sir," together with her strong Irish accent, never failed to elicit peals of mirth from butchers' boys and lounging watermen, a class she invariably addressed.

In the bewilderment of her mind, it was some time before Kate remembered what had placed her in the midst of this Babel, at length remembering Mary's injunction, she brushed up her courage, and prepared to enter the nearest shop to where she was standing. It was situated at the corner of a wide, fashionable street, its plate-glass windows were filled with magnificent vases, mandarins, monkeys ; pieces of silk wrought in gold and silver, the choicest product of the Persian looms ; shawls from India, each worth a prince's ransom ; shells, large wedges of amber entombing flies and curious insects ; ivory carvings from China ; in short all that was rare and costly were there collected to gratify the taste of the wealthy amateur. Wet as it was, a splendid equipage stood before the door ; the coachman crouching under some half-dozen capes, the footman seated on a long bench, shining like a looking-glass, so placed as to be secured from the weather by an awning which projected from the window. These latter worthies stared with no small degree of surprise, as Kate, timidly turning the cut-glass handle, prepared to enter the shop ; their insolent raillery was, however, lost on the girl, who, regarding their handsome liveries with no small degree of reverence, dropped them a simple curtsy, and passed on. The shop-counter was covered with splendid trinkets ; the bracelets of gold, crosses, brooches, rings, which sparkled in every direction, were displayed to the greatest advantage by two fashionably-dressed men, in order to tempt the capricious and satiated fancy of three ladies, by whom the shop was then occupied. Before the younger of the party, one of them eagerly displayed a roll of blue

brocade, flowered with silver; but the girl was moody as the sky; she shook her head until her ringlets and plumes danced in unison, and the repeated "Forward," and "Be kind enough to reach me those goods, Mr. Percival," addressed by the patient salesman to his assistant, proved she was indeed not inclined to be pleased. Nor did the elder lady seem in better humour; she deranged whole trays full of jewels, "wanted nothing, liked nothing, did not know what had brought her there at all," &c. &c. It was at this moment the person who was serving her, and who, by-the-by, was the master of the establishment, raised his eyes, and espied the dripping form of the intruder, who had approached so near the hallowed precincts of the counter, as really to endanger by contact the precious goods which were scattered in every direction; added to this, the smart carpet bore the unmistakable prints of her deeply-mudded feet; and to crown all, she was a safe vent for the anger which had accumulated from the fruitless labour of attending his titled customers.

"What do you want, my girl?" he inquired, in a tone as loud as respect for the ladies would permit, "and where in the name of wonder do you come from?"

"I want a situation, if you please, sir," answered Kate, pressing eagerly forward, "and I come from ——— Buildins, an' here's the lines of the parish priest, an'——"

"We know of no situations here," said the man, surlily, whilst the two ladies before mentioned stared at our heroine with amused wonder, as if she were some freshly-imported animal of a species hitherto unknown. The third of the party, who was less gorgeously attired

and less strikingly beautiful, at first sight, than her companions, laid down an illuminated manuscript, with which she had been engaged, and turned her eyes in the same direction: there was in the look an earnestness, a degree of interest, which emboldened Kate, and she therefore repeated, "Perhaps, my lady, *you'd* know of a situation?"

"Where then did you come from?" inquired the lady addressed, "and how long have you been in England?"

"Sure an', ma'am, I've been in London ownly the day, an' I slept last night in —— Buildins; an' Mrs. Carty says she'll give me the illigant carakter, an' it's a good sarvant you'll find me, if you'd be kind enough to thry, an' me mother died in Fermoy, an'—"

"Nonsense, Josephine," exclaimed the elder lady. "What is all this to you? I'm sure you can't understand a word she says." This was more than sufficient; at a sign from his employer, the assistant closed the door, and Kate found herself once more in the noisy street.

Crestfallen at her ill success, she wandered on, peering into the windows, yet fearful to venture again, until one shop more splendid than anything she had ever beheld brought her to a full halt. It too was at a corner, but it was larger and more lofty than the one where she had made her first essay; it was surrounded by showy lamps, which, as it was growing dusk, were now lighted; it had many entrances, at one of which people continually passed to and fro, bearing jugs. Swing-doors flew backwards and forwards without intermission, admitting all sorts of company, from the gay

woman rustling in silks and satins, to those of whom the girl observed with surprise that they seemed no better than herself. Through the windows, which were as clear as crystal, she observed large butts painted bright green, with black hoops, and taps which shone like silver; whilst posting-bills stuck here and there riveted her attention, and made her hope that servants were really wanted here, and that all the people she saw were going to be hired. Kate could not read, or the "Old Tom!" "Cream of the Valley," "Shrub," &c. would have mystified her still more. Accosting a man who had reeled out of one of the entrances, she inquired what those large letters meant, and if he thought they wanted a servant. The person addressed, who was already half-seas-over, endeavoured to steady himself and stare at Kate; in this, however, he was only partially successful, and it was with difficulty he contrived to stammer forth—

"Come along, my dear! I'll treat you to a quartern. Avast there! I've some coppers yet—I'll lighten the cargo before I cast anchor." So saying, and grasping her by the arm to preserve his equilibrium, he succeeded, before she had recovered her surprise, in dragging her to the bar of the gin-palace.

"Here, mate, a glass of brandy—gin (hiccup)—what'll you have, my dear?—for this young lady; don't be mock-modest; curse the expense; I'll pay all," and thrusting his hand into the pockets of his canvas trousers, he produced a number of coins, amongst which still glittered some silver pieces.

"Not cleaned out yet, you see; can run the rig a little longer, hey, landlord?" and he commenced whoop—

ing, hallooing, and capering with such a degree of violence, as to attract the attention of the real head of the establishment, a portly, consequential dame, then busy at the jug-and-bottle department.

"Tom," she exclaimed, "don't draw any more; he nearly broke the large chandelier last night. Come, sir, this is an orderly house; be pleased to budge, or I'll call a policeman. Be off, you jade!" she continued, turning furiously on the bewildered girl; "this is no place for such cattle; make yourself scarce, will you!"

"Move on, my girl," said the landlady's husband, a short, stout, good-tempered little man, who was serving customers in his shirt-sleeves for greater expedition; "that ere gemmen's a noisy cove, and the sooner you're quit of him the better."

"And what's that to you, Mr. Sinkin, pray?" inquired his spouse, whose asperity had been increased by Kate's beauty, in proportion as it had mollified her husband; "attend to your business, and leave me to mine. Troop, you hussy! *you*, I say."

"If you please, ma'am," said Kate, doubtfully, "I ownly came in to ask did you know of a situation."

"You'll find one in the black-hole, I'm thinking, before you're many minutes older. Here, Tom! Dick! turn that girl out! or, stop, give her in charge for being drunk and disorderly."

Kate, though thoroughly scared, was nimble as a fawn; she darted through the side-entrance, narrowly escaping fracturing a large pane, and did not stay to take breath until she was some distance from the scene of action. And it was well she did so; for the sailor,

highly indignant at the insults offered to "the tight little frigate he had taken in tow," brandished a thick cudgel over his head, with so little circumspection as really to damage the huge chandelier which formed the object of the landlady's former anxiety. A regular riot ensued; the tar fought valiantly, but being rather unsteady, he was marched off to the station-house by two policemen, and was released next morning on payment of a fine, with a severe reprimand.

Her first alarm having subsided, Kate paused to recover herself; only, however, to encounter fresh difficulties; in her confusion she had turned down a long narrow street, which, being composed of private houses, was comparatively dark; to retrace her steps was impossible; she knew not where she was; to stand still was of no use, so she hurried on, plunging herself deeper and deeper into the labyrinth of passages and alleys, which seemed to intersect each other in every direction. At length, to her great joy, she spied a small baker's shop, and hastening towards it, paused, tired and hungry, wistfully eyeing the loaves exposed for sale; fortunately her trifling stock of money was not quite exhausted, and as the shop was of the humbler class she ventured in, and having made her purchase, inquired if they could direct her to —— Buildings.

"Don't even know the name, my lass," answered a lanky-looking man who wore a white nightcap, though with more civility than our heroine had yet experienced, "there be's so many of them courts and buildings, there's no knowing where half on 'em's situated. Here, Lucy, can *you* tell this young woman whereabouts —— Buildings be's?"

The person thus addressed hastened from the inner shop; she was very pretty, very neat, and had on a very smart cap with bright pink ribbons: her husband having repeated his question, she shook her head as if in uncertainty, and turning to Kate, said—

“ I really don’t know; I’m afraid it’s a great way off; but I think you’d better ask a policeman.” The very mention of this functionary brought the tears into the girl’s eyes; but reassured by the woman’s kind manner, she ventured to add—

“ Praps, ma’am, it’s yerself ud be wantin’ a sarvant, an’ I’d like to stay wid the likes o’ you; an’ in the mornin’ may be I’d make out the place, and git me bits of things, an’—”

“ But where did you live last?” inquired Lucy, who really was in want of a girl to look after the children, “ and why did you leave your situation?”

“ Sure I lived last night in the Buildings wid Moll Carty, an’ before that I lived in me father’s cabin, forninst the Castle of Fermoy; an’ it’s myself has the good karakter, an’ can do everything.”

“ Well, who will give the character? and what *can* you do?” inquired the baker’s wife, smiling; “ are you accustomed to children?”

“ Not intirely, ma’am,” answered Kate; “ it’s most amongst the pigs I’ve been; an’ see here’s the beautiful karakter that the parish priest gave me whin I came away.” So saying, she produced the soiled paper, which she still tightly grasped, but which was so saturated with wet as to be almost illegible.

“ But we do not know this person,” said the master, having with considerable difficulty succeeded in de-

ciphering the signature; "it may be all very correct, but how can we be sure of it?"

"Not know Father Phelim! not know the parish priest of Castletown Roche!" cried Kate, with unfeigned astonishment. "Sure an' it's every one far an' wide knows him well, an' loves him too, for the matther o' that; an' what'll become o' me? I'll niver get a situation if every one asks so many questions."

"Well, then, what else can you do?" inquired the young woman, who really liked the appearance of the girl; "and who is this Moll Carty you mentioned?"

"Moll Carty's the fortin-teller; an' sure it's anything I can do; I can feed the pigs, an' milk the cow, an' bake the cakes, an' bring home the sticks, an' put the potatoes into the kish whin they're cracked, an'—"

"But can you sweep the rooms, clean the windows, and make the beds, my girl?"

"Sorra a windey there was in me father's cabin, barrin' the hole in the roof, an' that claned itsilf elligantly; but I can shake up the straw wid the best of thim, 'and put the three-legged pot on the turf ashes, an'—"

"It will never do, Lucy," said her husband, giving way to his risible feelings, which he had for some time with difficulty suppressed; "my poor girl, you be'ant at all fit for London service, even in our humble way; and the best advice I can give, is to get the parish to pass you back again as soon as possible; you will only come to harm here." The very mention of the parish wounded Kate's pride severely; and as to giving up the idea of making a fortune in London so soon, it was quite ridiculous. Highly resenting this honest yet

unpalatable advice, she turned sullenly away, and without another word quitted the shop.

"Poor child!" exclaimed its mistress, following her with her eyes, "why did she come here?"

"Why, indeed?" answered her husband; "she seems simple and innocent-like, which is more than I can say of all who do come; in most cases they be's the refuse of the country; those whose lives are so idle and dissolute, that they cannot obtain employment where they are known, and even if they could, the rascals won't exert themselves. However, I pity *her*, poor thing."

The baker was a vestryman, used to speech-making, and his wife had therefore a high opinion of his judgment (which, it may be remarked, was greatly inferior to her own). She made no answer, but, busying herself in her usual avocations, in a few moments Kate Gearey was forgotten.

On leaving the shop, the latter again walked briskly forward, nor did she slacken her pace until, her pet having subsided, she began to consider how she should find her way back. She had turned into a long wide thoroughfare full of shops, and with all the bustle of a market; stalls lined the kerb-stone; retail dealers in penny toys, pies, vegetables, &c. &c. were bawling at the very pitch of their voices, in order to attract the attention of passers-by to the delicacies of which they were the venders; small dirty-faced urchins were clustering round a certain old woman, who had for years regaled their juvenile palates with fried fish, little measures of periwinkles, small saucers containing a nondescript substance floating in dirty-looking vinegar, styled wilks, all for the small charge of one halfpenny;

rough-looking men were busily devouring enormous oysters; and here and there a slovenly woman, with a string of squalid children at her heels, was warbling "I love her, how I love her!" "They mourn me dead in my father's halls," and other appropriate melodies, occasionally varied by a full bass chorus of "All hot, all hot!" The appearance of a bright-looking machine containing *real fire*, completed the alarm of poor Kattie. Not knowing what it all meant, she inquired her way of more than one person without success; until a brawny Irishwoman, who was perambulating backwards and forwards with a basket of water-cresses, stopped short and exclaimed—

"Musha, me darlin', I lived in thim Buildins meeself; it's quite convaniant they are; this is Tottenham Coort Road; go on *as far as you can*; then turn to the left, an' keep on till you kum to a big church; then turn up agin, an' afther a time you'll be shure to make it out; ownly take care the blackguards don't set you wrong, the spalpeens!"

Thanking her informer for her very concise information, Kate proceeded on her journey, and, as she was to go as far as she *could*, scarcely paused for a full hour. The shops were now far behind her, and she was in a long road, which became more lonely every moment, and was evidently leading to the open country. Thoroughly exhausted and frightened, she stopped short, and covering her face with her hands, burst into a violent flood of tears.

"What's the matter, my girl? and what are you doing here at this hour of the night?" exclaimed a rough but kind voice. Thus addressed, Kate looked

up, and, according to her own account, saw what she considered to be "a dancing bear, with an eye of burning fire right in the middle of his forehead, and a long pole in his paw." Terrified out of her senses, she uttered one or two screams of a shrillness which astonished the policeman (for such he was), who was unprepared for so noisy a return to his civility.

"Now don't, sir, pray don't," she sobbed forth, falling on her knees as if to avert some impending calamity.

"Don't what? why the wench is mad; I'm not touching you: come, what are you doing here?" and he lowered his bull's eye, which he had turned towards her.

"I'm looking for —— Buildins, thin, sir," answered Kate, somewhat reassured. "I was tould to go as far as I could, an'——"

"Go as far as you could! Why, you're in the Hampstead Road, far enough, I should think, from the place you want: but at any rate I'm on my way to the Marylebone station; so come with me, and I'll get one of the D division to see you safe."

"Ah, plaze, sir, don't lock me up; I'm ownly lookin' for a situation;" and she began to cry again so violently as almost to wear out the man's patience.

"I'll take you in charge in earnest, if you are not quiet; you'll be murdered on this dreary road;" and grasping her by the arm, he compelled her to walk by his side until he came to the New Road, where, happening to meet one of the force who was going in the required direction, he consigned her to his charge; and

with no farther adventure worth mentioning, Kate, at a late hour, found herself once more in Moll Carty's large room, where her protracted absence had excited some speculation.

"Well," said Florry Daly, when her recital had terminated, "you *are* a Gracian, to be sure. Now take my advice, *alanna*, don't be any man's sarvant but your own, and don't be afther makin' an omaudhaun of yerself any more."

"Thin what am I to do, if I don't git a situation?" inquired Kate, earnestly, for there was something in Florry's manner which flattered her vanity.

"Git yerself a husband, me dear; an' it's not I that's chaffin ayther: here am I a fine likely young fellow, wid the use av me two hands, an' all the girls dying wid the love o' me; an' now if you jist say the word, it's to-morrow I'll put up the banna, an' you'll reform me intirely."

Kate, like all her countrywomen, was too thorough-paced a coquette to be displeased with Daly's gallantry; in fact, these hasty matches never excite surprise amongst the class to which she belonged: she, however, did not answer; but Sheehan, always ripe for a frolic, exclaimed—

"Take him at his word, Kattie; you may go farther and fare worse; an' it'll do the sowl o' me good to see Nell Sullivan chated, jist as she thought she'd got it all her own way."

"An' that's like you, Pat Sheehan," replied the person alluded to; "make yourself aisy, I'll remember it to you till me dying day; an', Florry, mind I'll be even wid you yet."

So saying, she stalked off, and was soon in close conversation with Mrs. Carty.

"But," said the latter, after a lengthened whispering, "betther tell her at once, an' thin he'll be glad of you again, Nell."

"No!" answered the girl, fire flashing from her eyes, "I'll have me revinge, Moll Carty, an' it's not the likes of you I'll be said by. I know too much for any o' you, an' if you step betwixt me an' her you'll repint it tother side of the wather, that's all."

"Take care then, Nell; for if the Sheehans or owld Murphy, or any of thim suspect you, they'll be after puttin' a spoke in yer wheel, an' Mary's taken a fancy to the girl, an'—"

"You'd no business to have the Sheehans here; you knew they'd niver be one of us, wid their prachin' an' sarmin'ts, an' prayin', an' all to plaze Father Morgan; an' Pat says he'll take the pledge whin the missioners come."

"Why, Nell, you can't see through a stone wall, cute as you are; if things go wrong, it's ownly to hide any av the articles under Sheehan's bed; an' do you think the polishmen 'll let him off? not they, indeed; I know the law."

"So I've heer'd," answered Nell, with emphasis; "but thrust me, Moll, Florry an' the Burkes have somethin' between thim that we know nothin' about; an' now this milksop's in the way, we may look after oursilves, that's all."

"Now, let's look at the cards;" and Mrs. Carty, pulling a greasy pack from under her, threw out a certain number, then commenced arranging the remainder

in four separate parcels, whilst Nell, with staring eyes and gaping mouth, devoured every word which fell from the old woman's lips, treasuring them as if they were oracles. Just, however, as she had succeeded in awakening the most intense interest in her dupe, Mrs. Carty sprang from her seat, scattered the cards in every direction, and uttered a yell which startled the whole company: "There he is again!" she exclaimed, frantically; "I see the sarpint's head undher Nell Sullivan's chair. Sure an' I promised Father Morgan niver to do business any more; an' now I've broke me word, an' the divil 'll have me body an' sowl."

"An' sarve you right," said old Murphy. "See what you will, you'll see nothing worse than yerself."

"I tell you I see the divil, he's curled round me tight;" and she began tugging at her chest, as if to extricate herself from some invisible object.

"She's in one of her dhrunken fits," said Florry, drily; for he was accustomed to the fortune-teller's nocturnal vagaries. "Come, be aisy, you witch! an' let us have some pace; keep your freaks till to-morrow, will you? Brandy or divil, it's all one, keep thim to yoursilf, and make the most o' thim."

There was that in Daly's eye which Mrs. Carty did not think it convenient to misunderstand; indeed it was very seldom she ventured on a display when he was present; as it was she sat quietly down, and answered in a cowed tone—

"You're a wonderful man, Florry Daly; sure an' it's at your voice the sarpint laves me; it'll not thrubble me agin to-night."

“ So much the better,” he answered, with a derisive laugh; as Moll, letting her head fall on the table, soon gave unequivocal proofs of the soundness of her repose.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DEATH-BED.

“ JOSEPHINE, what can be the meaning of purl-twist? do you know?” inquired Mrs. Selby, as, on a sultry June evening, she divided her attention between a half-finished anti-macassar and an open book which lay beside her. Miss Bradshawe shook her head.

“ Ah, you never know anything useful, that’s one comfort. I suppose your religion consists in holding your tongue and looking miserable; not a word have you spoken for the last hour; one might as well be dumb as live with you.”

“ I thought just now you said you could not knit if I interrupted you,” said Josephine, with a half-smile.

“ There now, I’ve dropped a stitch; that’s all through you,” exclaimed the old lady, assuming her spectacles; “ and I don’t think I can see to take it up. Where was I? Oh, slip one, purl two, knit—I’m all wrong; I must undo the whole row. Well, Catholics are, without exception, the most tiresome people in the world; they always talk when they should be silent, and think of nothing but a set of worthless creatures. I’m sure you’re not like the same being that you used to be; I don’t wonder at what Lord Lindore says.—Pray,

Josephine, be silent ; I think I can make it come right now."

Perfectly accustomed to Mrs. Selby's continual fault-finding, Miss Bradshawe had resumed her book, without having penetrated the meaning of one word of her aunt's soliloquy ; and as the latter's attention was for a short time engrossed by the refractory knitting, she gradually sank again into the train of thought which had been so suddenly broken. She was seated near a small table by an open window, her cheek resting on her hand, her eyes apparently fixed on the volume before her ; yet as the reflection of the lamp fell full on her features, it would have been obvious to a more scrutinising observer that her thoughts had wandered far from its author. There was on her open brow an expression of gravity almost amounting to severity, and her lips were firmly compressed, as was her wont when she had once formed her resolution, or, as Mrs. Selby would express it, "when she was in an obstinate fit." Her left hand mechanically wandered amongst a number of dirty-looking notes, which lay scattered around ; and her deep, though unconscious, sigh again attracted the notice of her companion, who, having mastered her difficulty, was now at leisure to attend to external objects.

"What is the matter, child ?" she inquired ; "what can you be thinking of ? You tire yourself running no one knows where all the morning : Dr. Sumners told Lady Lindore you'd kill yourself if you went on as you do this hot weather."

"I was thinking," exclaimed Josephine, replying to the first part of Mrs. Selby's speech, "I was thinking

of what now should occupy all our thoughts—I mean, the cholera.”

“ Bless me, my dear, you don’t really mean to say it is here ? how you do frighten one ! Why all the world expected it last year, and prepared accordingly ; but it all ended in nothing.”

“ Ask Dr. Sumners what *he* thinks,” answered Josephine, calmly ; “ though perhaps he is too politic to frighten his patients out of harm’s way.”

“ Why, he certainly did tell the Lindores there *might* be a *few* cases, and disinterestedly advised them to leave town as soon as this tiresome lawsuit would permit, for there seems no chance of Angela and Lord Norville’s making up their minds this season ; and the earl said he should like to take you with them, if—, and that I could go to Malvern.”

“ If what ? and why did not my uncle speak to me himself ?”

“ Because he did not think you would agree to his terms, and he knows you inherit all the perversity of your mother’s race.”

“ Agree ! are his demands, then, so very unreasonable that you fear to name them ?” inquired Josephine, gravely.

“ Why, my dear, it would not be for long. And if you could just go to the church with the family, or stay at home quietly, or do anything but scandalize the whole neighbourhood by posting by yourself to that tumble-down loft which they call a chapel, and where they perform such abominable mummeries, that I am astonished a girl of your sense can be present without laughing outright ; and if you would abstain from

crossing yourself when the chaplain says grace, and looking grave when he dances the polka, or is *rather* witty; and if you would eat meat on Fridays, and—”

“In short, if I would put my conscience into harness, and resign the reins to my uncle’s hands. Pray, did Lord Lindore expect this?” and Josephine’s eyes flashed, whilst her cheek glowed with indignation.

“I cannot say he did; on the contrary, he thought it useless broaching the subject. He said something about your having made one *great* sacrifice, and the folly of expecting to shake you afterwards; though I’m sure *I* never heard of any sacrifice you had to make. You’ve everything you want; and if you think proper to occupy your time in this strange manner, it’s your own choice, that’s quite certain.”

“I am glad Lord Lindore, at least, does me justice,” exclaimed Miss Bradshawe, rather bitterly. “And as for Dr. Sumner’s *probabilities*, he knows as well as I do that the cholera has been for some time in London; aye, and in this very parish too, within a stone’s throw from where we stand; that the cases have rapidly multiplied during the last week; and although I myself have as yet witnessed none which have terminated fatally, the bills of mortality are on the increase, and we cannot expect (considering the filthy lodgings and undrained localities inhabited by our poor neighbours) to escape scatheless.”

“*Not as yet?* Why, Josephine, do you really mean to say you have seen the cholera?” inquired Mrs. Selby, pale with alarm.

“I mean to say I have seen several attacked by that disease, and within a few days too; they have all,

however, recovered rapidly, some even without medical attendance, though I fear this favourable form of the disorder cannot be expected to last long."

"But surely *you* are not going to visit people who have the cholera? and surely Catholic priests are not mad enough to venture into such dens of contagion; are they?"

"Then what is to become of the poor?" demanded Josephine, with a suppressed smile.

"They must go to the hospital, of course, where there are nurses and doctors, and all that sort of thing, and where they'll be much better off."

"As far as their bodies are concerned, I grant you, though, by the bye, the hospitals would not hold one-half of them; yet what is to become of their souls, should the Catholics *not* earn your title to insanity, I am at a loss to guess. But rest assured, my dear aunt, none of these poor creatures will be allowed to perish without spiritual consolation whilst London contains a single priest to impart it, even although he knew the consequences to himself must be instantaneous death."

"You don't mean to tell me that's a part of the system?" inquired Mrs. Selby, opening her eyes very wide; "I thought your ministers only attended rich people, and got them to make their wills, and disinherit their children, and force their daughters into convents, and—"

Miss Bradshawe laughed outright. "It is astonishing," she exclaimed, "that with riches so easily acquired our churches remain so poor; and it is still more astonishing all these disinherited heirs should take their

wrongs so quietly that we never hear of them ; at any rate, it is quite certain whatever the magnitude of the danger, the souls of the Catholic poor will neither be intrusted to nurses, doctors, nor workhouse chaplains, even if—”

“ Why, Josephine, what objection have you to workhouse chaplains? You wouldn't surely expect Dr. Selwood to risk *his* valuable life, and take home such a dreadful disease to his wife and six beautiful children, when any one can read a chapter or two in the Bible ? ”

“ Without entering into a discussion as to what may or may not be Dr. Selwood's clerical duties, I can only repeat that the Catholic priest having a little more to do at a death-bed than read a chapter in the Bible, is not in the habit of delegating nurse or doctor to fulfil one of the most important offices of his sacred ministry. A few prayers mumbled at the end of the ward, a hurried inquiry as to this or that patient, *would-be* cutting remarks on Popery should any Catholic be present, and the spiritual functions of hospitals are considered zealously performed—nay, more—”

“ What is the matter, Ellen ? ” interrupted Mrs. Selby, as the servant entering presented a soiled and strangely-folded paper, decorated with an enormous wafer, still wet, to Miss Bradshawe.

“ The young girl who brought it, madam, waits for an answer ; her name, she says, is Kate Gearey, but that you do not know her.”

Josephine glanced at the address, which ran as follows : “ To the honor'd Miss Bradshawe, Esq. ; ” and tearing it open with a smile, read as follows :—

"Most kind and rivirint Miss—

"Plaze, Miss, yer humbel petitioner, Winny Pratt, is dying spacheless, and says, Miss, she can't go aisey if she don't see you; so we humbly hope yer honnur won't delay, as our mother can't last the night anyhow.

"Yer honnur's humbel petitioners, her sons Pat and Mickey Pratt."

"Send the girl in, Ellen," exclaimed Josephine; and before Mrs. Selby's "What is it all about, at this hour of the night?" had passed her lips, our heroine stood before the two ladies. The recognition was mutual; for whilst Kate gazed admiringly on the kind lady of the Indian warehouse, Josephine marked with sorrow the alteration which two short months had effected on the unsophisticated healthy-looking "Gracian." Bad diet and worse air had rendered her pretty features pale, wasted, and careworn; years, not weeks, seemed added to her life; although, notwithstanding the restraint imposed by those in whose presence she found herself, it was evident she had not completely lost that genuine simplicity which had first attracted Miss Bradshawe's attention.

"I think I have seen you before?" said the latter, gently.

"Yes, plaze, my lady, whin I was luki'g afther the situation; but I didn't git it at all, and it's meesilf didn't know what I'd do."

"And what did you do?" inquired Josephine.

"Nothin', my lady; an' how could I? The character was of no use; an' meesilf didn't know the ways of London, an' had no one to spake for me, an'—"

"Did you apply to any of the priests?"

"Indeed an' I didn't; bekase there was a well-wisher of mine said it was of no use, they had so many; an' I'd betther wait till Easter come round, and thin it ud be time enough."

"Wait for twelve months!" exclaimed her auditor; "but I see there is something you wish to conceal, and will not press you further."

"Oh, my lady, it's ownly a thrifle; but I forgot the poor craythur that sent me, an' I'm afeard you'll not overtake her thin."

"Is she really so ill? she was in perfect health two days ago."

"So I've heerd," answered Kattie; "an' I'm ownly a neybour. She lives in the end room on Moll Carty's floore; but I know they said it was jist off she was, an' she wouldn't die till you kum."

"Has Father Morgan been sent for?" inquired Josephine, anxiously.

"An' it's meesilf knows nothing at all, at all," said Kate, wincing at the bare mention of a priest; "but sure whin yer ladyship kums, *you'll* know all about it:" and she edged rapidly towards the door.

"Never mind; I shall be there as soon as yourself," exclaimed Josephine, as the girl disappeared, glad to escape a cross-examination she was so ill prepared to meet. A few short weeks ago, and Kate Gearey would have hailed with delight this encounter with Josephine Bradshawe; as it was, she shrank abashed, conscious that she had too easily imbibed the tastes, habits, nay, vices of the worthless and bad into whose society she had been thrown. The temptations were, it is true,

great; but into the gulf had she fallen without a struggle, urged on by sloth, vanity, and confidence in her own powers of resistance.

"But you are not really going, Josephine?" insisted Mrs. Selby, as her niece put on her bonnet, and allowed Ellen to arrange her mantilla: "it is past ten o'clock."

"It is very late; yet I think in this case it is an imperative duty."

"I see no duty at all, and I dare say the woman can wait until to-morrow; I should not be surprised if it was all a trick to murder you."

"I do not see what they could gain by that: however, I know the woman, and have often visited her lately; so set your mind at ease, and I will tell you in a few words why I am so anxious to go to her. About a month ago, being in —— Buildings, I was asked by Mary Sheehan to step into the Large House, and see a woman whom they considered to be possessed; I did so, and found this very Winny Pratt stretched on the floor, foaming at the mouth, raving in the wildest manner, and attempting to bite every one who approached her. On my entrance, she accosted me as the Evil Spirit, and even endeavoured to strike the crucifix from my hand; she had leeches on her temples, but in the violence of her struggles she dashed them off, and the blood spirted against the wall. From the neighbours I could glean nothing, except that she had totally neglected her religious duties since she came there, and that was near two years ago. Well, Father Morgan was sent for, and administered the sacrament of extreme unction, amidst the most horrible imprecations and language, which even now to think of makes me shudder: we

went away, and shortly after our departure the fit left her. On my calling next day, she seemed perfectly recovered. I then learnt that it was years since she had entered a church, and that wherever she went she had been considered a curse to her neighbours, and a scandal to her children, who had, alas ! followed too closely in her footsteps ; still she promised to amend her life, and day after day have I urged her to keep her word, feeling a presentiment something terrible would shortly befall her. You now see the results."

"Still I do not comprehend what all this is to you," grumbled Mrs. Selby ; "Protestant ladies know their duty to society too well to run themselves into such scenes ; besides, no woman should ever enter a sick-room until she is forty at least. But I might as well talk to a statue," she continued, as the door closed after Josephine ; "I wish to goodness she was married, and then she might be of some use."

With a light, rapid step, and perfect self-possession, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, did Miss Bradshawe walk down one or two streets, and then cross the square mentioned in our first chapter ; nor did she slacken her pace until she reached the entrance of the Buildings. It was a clear, moonlight night ; yet so pre-occupied was her mind, that although sensitively alive to the beauties of nature, she now heeded them not. She paused for a moment before plunging into the long dark alley, filled by men quarrelling, *larking*, and in most cases the worse for liquor ; it was, however, only to raise her veil, and once known she pressed fearlessly onward, the dense crowd opening as if mechanically, and closing again behind her ; whilst "God speed you,

miss!" and other exclamations of a similar nature, issued from the lips of those able to articulate. Not even the intense gloom and intricate passages of the Large House seemed to offer any impediment to her progress; she hurried down the latter, ascended the perilous stairs with an heroic disregard of projecting nails, loose boards, broken balustrades, and even the well itself, passing many doors from which issued a confusion of sounds that drowned her footsteps; and then placing her hand against a broken panel at the extremity of the suite of rooms by which the deserter had made his escape, it yielded to her touch, and in a moment she stood by the bed of the dying woman,—for that dying she was, Josephine was assured at a single glance.

The countenance of Winny Pratt had already assumed that greenish-blue tint, almost the last and most painful stage of the dreaded and prevalent disorder; her head was thrown back, and her long dark hair streamed around her as she rolled to and fro in her agony. The cramps were at times so violent that the back of the sufferer was occasionally drawn into an arch, now rising from the acuteness of pain until she rested on the soles of her feet, then sinking again with the most thrilling screams; the ends of her fingers were livid, but the hands and even the arms were blackened, as though mortification had already taken place. Her sons and one or two women were present; yet though hurrying to and fro, as if busied about something, it was evident none dared approach the quarter of the chamber where she lay.

"It is the cholera!" exclaimed Josephine, pressing

her fingers on the woman's wrist, and turning pale as she marked the quick feeble beatings of the pulse. "She has not many hours to live; have you sent for Father Morgan?"

"Shure an', my lady, she wouldn't be said by us," answered her eldest son; "its yersilf she wanted intirely."

"Dhrink! dhrink! I'm choking wid the drought," yelled the sufferer; "give me the dhrink, I say."

Josephine held a broken cup containing some cold tea to her lips; and then writing a line in pencil on one of the leaves of her pocket-book, consigned it to Pat, with an injunction to lose no time before he placed it in the hands of one of the priests.

"Who's there?" again vociferated the woman, glaring around her; "it's divils I see everywhere. I'm dying now, an' what'll become of my sowl?"

"Oh, mother," said Mickey, cautiously advancing, "the praste'll be here in no time, an' Miss Bradshawe'll read to you."

"Yer welkim, miss," she answered, wildly. "Didn't I promise I'd go to my dooty? it's too late now, you see; I'll be dead before the praste kums, an' I can't pray nayther."

Another terrible spasm succeeded, which made Josephine fear her predictions would indeed be verified.

"I will pray for you," she said, when Winny was a little more tranquil; and kneeling down, she commenced the litanies for the dying, though not without many an anxious glance towards the door.

"Tell me, miss," said the woman, in a tone of concentrated passion, rising as she spoke, in her

bed, "must we forgive our inimies? I'd like to know?"

"Of course, if we hope to be forgiven; surely we have offended our good God more than any creature can have offended us."

"Sure an' I'm not expicted to forgive my husband? Didn't he lave me to starve wid the childre? An' didn't he take up wid a Pradestant like himsilf before me? An' didn't he kick me, an' bate me, an'—"

"Do not think of his cruel treatment now, but pray that you may be happy together in heaven."

"In heaven!" shrieked the sufferer, her countenance even more distorted by rage than pain; "in heaven! what 'ud he do in heaven, a desaver? Didn't he thry to make me sell me religion and become a swaddler, to get the district money? An' didn't he break me bones becaze I'd not let him make haythens of the childre? An' didn't he stale me beautiful girl to be a sarvant to the pair o' thim? An' didn't he make a divil o' me, an' make me curse? An' now the divil 'll have us both."

Another paroxysm succeeded, poor Winny sank back exhausted, fast merging towards a state of collapse. With a trembling voice did Josephine re-commence the litanies, as it was evident the ill-spent life of the unfortunate woman was drawing towards its close; and it was almost with a shriek of joy she sprang to her feet, as Father Morgan and Pat entered the room.

"Am I too late?" inquired the former, looking at Miss Bradshawe. Josephine pointed to the bed. The good priest bent down; and after addressing a few words to the sufferer, made a sign for those present to

leave the room. The men, with the insensibility produced by habitual intoxication, lounged into the court, only eager to escape the reprimand they were conscious of having merited; the women were soon gossiping in the adjoining chambers; whilst Josephine knelt down on the dark broken stair, occupying herself during the next half-hour by petitioning the Mother of her God, the meek, the compassionate Mary, to intercede for this poor erring creature, about to appear before an offended Judge.

And how was this half-hour passed by Father Morgan? Delicate in constitution, worn out and exhausted by a day of labour which scarce left him time to snatch a hasty meal, he had, on the eve of retiring to rest, cheerfully attended the summons of duty; and now imbibing the fetid, plague-laden atmosphere of a cell polluted by filth and overrun with vermin, he rested on the edge of the bed, and leant over her whose every respiration was death, whose every wild raving was an arrow to the heart of one whose innocent life of self-sacrifice would have been cheerfully rendered up to purchase the salvation of one immortal soul. Yet he thought not of weariness or of danger; it was his duty. Duty! that magic word—that war-cry of the Catholic priest—the ensign round which they rally; and despite persecution, ingratitude, failing health, incompetent means, and every other obstacle, perish or conquer, no matter which. Careless of the world's smiles, heedless of its frowns, sympathizing with, yet above, its petty sorrows, they press onwards, until a blighted youth or toilsome old age is rewarded by the martyr's crown and a glorious eternity. Such are the

priests of God's Church ; such have they ever been, in the dungeon, on the rack or scaffold, ready to dare all, to suffer all ; contributing no less by their example than by their ministry, to the preservation in all its purity of the religion for which they were born ; and for which they are willing to die.

The door at length opened ; and on a sign from Father Morgan, Josephine re-entered the apartment. The woman was now sensible and free from pain, although very weak, and apparently sinking fast.

"I shall administer the Viaticum, since the sickness has ceased," exclaimed the priest, gravely ; whilst Miss Bradshawe looked around in vain for any place which she might prepare for this last and most solemn sacrament of the Church. In this abode of wretchedness, table there was none ; the bed on which Mrs. Pratt lay—a bundle of shavings, forming the nightly resting-place of her sons, and what had once been a chair, but was now divested of the back and one of its legs—constituted the sole furniture of the apartment. On the mantle-shelf glimmered an inch of candle, fastened to an oyster-shell by a drop of its own grease, scarcely affording sufficient light to distinguish surrounding objects. Yet here, without hesitation, did Father Morgan, opening his ritual, commence those solemn and beautiful prayers prescribed by the Church for such occasions. It had been a fine study for a painter : the ruinous and ill-furnished room ; the bright moonlight streaming through the broken and uncurtained casement, investing even the rude domestic implements with a halo peculiarly its own, and falling full on the white robes of the kneeling girl, who, with bowed head and

clasped hands, seemed insensible to aught save the presence of her God ; the discoloured and pain-distorted features of the dying woman, whose eyes were yet upturned with an expression of hopeful resignation to the countenance of the priest, which was bent over her, wearing the aspect of meek adoration beseeeming the solemnity of the occasion and the august Presence which then graced that wretched hovel, and whose minister he was.

Of all the imposing and touching ceremonies of the Church, there is none more imposing, more touching, than that in which the reconciled sinner, whose life has been one continued scene of suffering and poverty, perhaps also steeped to the very lips in guilt, prepares for the last time to receive within his bosom that God before whom the seraphim veil their faces and the great ones of the earth are as nought, and before whom he himself is presently to appear. Yes, that very sacrament which was just now borne in triumph round our churches with all the little pomp our grateful hearts could offer, attended by richly-robed priests, preceded by floating banners, innumerable lights, clouds of incense, and above all by God's own gift, the fairest and sweetest flowers, is carried, immediately perhaps after the procession is over, by that same priest, alone, on foot, and in the most inclement weather, to the pallet of some expiring wretch ; there (without any outward demonstration of respect, perhaps not even a single friend to breathe a prayer), to soothe his passage from this world, and accompany him in his last terrible journey.

The rites of religion had been administered to

Mrs. Pratt, the concluding sentences yet lingered on the lips of Father Morgan, when Josephine, whose eyes were fixed on her face, observed a movement, slight indeed, but sufficient to indicate that the vital spark had fled; she raised her hand, and the priest at once understanding the action and its cause, passed on to recite the prayers for a departed soul. He had hardly closed the book, when a number of the neighbours bustled into the room, some from curiosity, others under pretext of assisting poor Winny; but really, unwilling to lose so good an opportunity of explaining their wants, neither few nor trifling, to one who never, whilst his pocket contained a single coin, allowed them to pass unrelieved. A tumultuous and universal petition (for "shoes for the childre to go to school! flannel petticoats for the owld woman; the price of the tay; a light for the night, as Mickey had hurted hisself,") was suddenly checked, as the priest pointed emphatically towards the corse. The first moment's silent astonishment was changed into that deafening howl, so peculiar to the Irish nation under any circumstances of grief or excitement. Almost sinking with fatigue, Father Morgan availed himself of this opportunity to effect his escape; and Josephine, alarmed at the lateness of the hour, prepared to follow his example, when her arm was seized by a wild ruffian-looking man, who loitered on the threshold, as if longing, yet dreading to advance.

"Your pardon, madam," he exclaimed; "but what's all this here row about? It's a strange thing, when a man comes to his own home, to find it filled in this way, as if Bedlam was let loose, and no mistake."

"Sure an' it's Pratt himself, the ripribate!" screamed

a diminutive crone, whose voice had been predominant in the preceding tumult. "Kum an' luk at your work, you murtherer you; sure an an't you shamed to face yer two sons? But you've ate shame, an' dhrank afther it too for that matther, you vagabond, an' bad manners to you."

"For heaven's sake, young lady, tell me what she means," said the man, turning very pale, and gazing wildly around him. He had evidently been drinking, and Miss Bradshawe shrank timidly from the contact.

"I will not hurt you: why do you fear *me* more than these?" he pointed contemptuously towards the group.

"Becase she's no raison to fear us, I'd hope," said our old acquaintance, Norry Casey, proudly; "an' if you lay the print av your hand on the very gownd she wears, sure an' it's meeself'll call the min, an' it's not in a whole skin you'll sleep the nite, Ned Pratt. But as I spose you must be answered, bein' as it were the nat'ral mather o' the room, p'raps you'd be plazed to know your wife's dead, an' widout seein' the child, you brute baste you."

Effectually sobered by this intelligence, the man again turned towards Josephine, and gasped out, "For God's sake, madam, does she speak the truth?"

Touched by his present distress and the agony she knew must be in store for him, she replied, mildly, "She does; but she died happily, and resigned."

"'Tis false, girl! 'tis false!" roared the man, with an intensity of passion which made the crowd draw back; then, darting towards the bed, he gazed for a moment on his wife's face, bearing palpable marks of

that dire disease which had terminated her existence. "Winny," he exclaimed, sinking on his knees by her side, "look at me, your husband; I'm come back to you. I'm a monster, a brute, I know it; only tell me so."

"She is dead; 'tis useless," said Josephine, her eyes full of tears; "but in that you are not to blame; she died of the cholera."

"I knew the hag lied when she said I killed her," yelled the man, shaking his fist at Norry, who returned the compliment, though in so grotesque a manner as under other circumstances to have excited the mirth of Josephine; "but, lady, 'tis well she died, for my tongue must have broken her heart. Did she ask for her child?"

"Ah, what's it you've done wid her? there's Pat an' Mickey 'll bring you to the fore, Misther Pratt," interrupted Mrs. Casey; "so you'd betther send her here in time for the wake."

"Oh, would that I could!" groaned the conscience-stricken wretch, writhing in agony, and burying his face in the rags which covered the corse, "would that I could! But—you at least will pity me;" and he turned his bloodshot eyes on Josephine. "I was a soldier three-and-twenty years ago (no much good either); my regiment was quartered in Cork. Now, whether it was my red coat, or my handsome face (I was handsome enough then), when we were ordered home, I persuaded poor Winny there to leave her father's house. She was the only child of an old man, and motherless, which made it worse. We were married by a Catholic priest, and at first I was kind

enough, at least for me ; but drink and bad company were my bane. I was disgraced, left the army, treated my wife worse than a dog ; at last I left her altogether, and took up with an English-woman—not that I cared much for her ; but she was as bad as myself, and did not trouble herself how I came by the money, so she had it to spend. I saw Winny now and then ; I think she hoped I'd come back some day ; but the woman paid me off ; somehow or other she'd found everything out, and could hang me if she chose. Each day I grew worse and worse, yes, and more miserable too ; I wanted something to love, and everything seemed to hate me, except my little girl ; whenever I came home, the child clung to me and kissed me, and called me ' father ;' so at last I stole her, and took her to live with me and Martha. This only made matters worse : the woman hated her, and tried all she could to make her as wicked as herself ; and when she could not succeed, ill-treated her, to cause her to run away. She had grown up very pretty, too pretty—like her mother when I first saw her—and I hoped to get her a situation ; but who would take the daughter of one like me into their houses ? However, as ill-luck would have it, twelve months ago I took a fever ; the doctor said it was brought on by drink, and I went to the hospital ; my head was quite gone, so that I hardly knew how long I had been there. At last I was discharged, and went back to my lodgings ; but I found the room shut up, the furniture sold, and the woman—the fiend !—off ! I did not care for her ; I was glad to be rid of her ; but my child ! the property I had gained at the peril of my life, by the loss of my soul ! I tracked the

wretch, and found her married; yes, married to one who, bad as I am, was a thousand time worse; she taunted, laughed at me; but when I asked for my girl, she bade me seek her in—the—streets! This maddened me; I struck her to the earth, left her weltering in her own black blood, was imprisoned, punished, narrowly escaped transportation, and on being released wandered here: you know the rest. Now, madam, I have a favour to ask;” and he stood erect before her. “I do not intend to repent: I am at war with my fellow-men, and where I am stung will sting again; for this world I care not, of the next I know nothing. But for my poor lost girl I do care; and sooner or later, when tired of her sinful life, I know her mother’s early lessons, and the influence of that religion—true or false, I don’t know, and I don’t care—in which she was brought up, will lead her here again; befriend her then—and may God bless you!” Scarcely had he ceased speaking, when the hubbub recommenced; and Miss Bradshawe, deeply affected, yet not knowing how to offer consolation in his present excited state, resolved to step into Moll Carty’s apartments, and send Sheehan to prevent any unpleasant result from a meeting between Pratt and his sons. As she hurried along the passage, not without uneasiness at the alarm her protracted absence must occasion Mrs. Selby, she fancied she detected unequivocal symptoms of wild riot proceeding from the very room. After pausing a moment, she set it down to an imagination weakened by the horrors she had so lately witnessed; boldly advancing, she lifted the latch, and before she was aware of it, stood in the midst of a scene to which no description can do justice,

and which, had it been in her power, she would gladly have avoided.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ADVENTURE.

KATE breathed more freely when the door of Mrs. Selby's house closed behind her, but it was not until she had reached the end of the street that she in any way recovered her self-possession. Disinclined as she was for reflection, she could not still the voice which would make itself heard; and the unexpected identity of Josephine with the lady whom she had never forgotten, awakened anything but a pleasing retrospect as she contrasted her present self with what she then was.

Dispirited—nay, disgusted—by her first ineffectual search for a situation, Kate had easily yielded to Florry Daly's suggestion that "they two had best make a match of it;" although the reasons she had assigned to herself were neither very far-sighted nor very prudential. "Florry was a handsome lad, an' ud mak a fortin somehow; he was up to the ways of London too; an' as she *must* marry sooner or later, she might go farther an' fare worse. An' wasn't there Nell Sullivan dying wid the love av him? an' what a crow it ud be over her, an' from a Gracian too! an' then then there'd be an end of the lectures which owld blind Murphy gave, jist to show how knowing he was: an'—" but here Kate's arguments assumed a less pleas-

ing form. "Florry did not go to his dooty at all," indeed he particularly objected to his wife's "thrubbling the prastes, barrin' Easter." Kate, on the contrary, had never, since her first communion, allowed an indulgence to pass without approaching the sacraments, and she had much wished to consult one of the "clergy" before yielding her conscience so unconditionally into his hands; but he was not the lad to ask twice. Poor Kattie's little money was quite gone, her few superfluous articles of clothing had been parted with, at first reluctantly enough; yet she had of late become surprisingly inured to a pawnbroker's box, her shamefacedness having melted as snow before the fire of Mrs. Carty's wrath, invariably kindled when her young lodger was unable to satisfy her not always reasonable demand.

"What's the matther now, Kattie?" inquired Mary Sheehan, as one day entering the room she found our heroine alone, busily rubbing a very tearful face with a dirty apron.

"Shure an' it's meesilf doesn't know what I'll do, Mary dear; that owld skinflint, Moll Carty, insists on the rint for her dirty hole, an' didn't I pawn me gown an' shawl to sadisfy her? musha! what'll become of me? I've ownly these left, an' it'll break me heart to part thim, becaze they belonged to my poor mother, God rest her sowl!" and as she spoke, she held up an old-fashioned rosary, the beads of which being silver were of some trifling value.

"Did Moll Carty see those?" inquired Mary, anxiously.

"Yis; an' what thin?" answered Kattie.

"Thin part them directly, me girl; there's nothin' too hot or too heavy for the paws of the dirthy owld vagabond; she'll conjure them away wid some of her divil's thricks; it's small rivirince the likes of her has for bades or holy things: you can get thim agin whin you're married to Florry."

"Married to Florry! ah, that's another great thrubble!" and her tears began to flow afresh. "You see, Biddy Sarchfield advised me to spake to one of the clargy, an' maybe he'd assist me for the time; an' I've not knelt before one of thim iver sinse I came to this haythenish place; an' I've neglected my prayers, an' stayed from the mass; an' what ud Father Phelim say if he knew it all? Well, Florry heer'd her, an' rapped out a tundering oath, that ud have made me crass meeself but that I saw Nell Sullivan grin; an' he swore no praste should let or make in his consarns, that he'd be married by the parson or not at all: for why? it didn't shute him to settle his conscience jist at present; an' he looked quite awful-like. Now, Mary, what'll I do? if I don't have him Nelly will, an' I must go to sarvice afther all."

Mrs. Sheehan, kind and good-hearted as she was, constituted by no means a wise or safe adviser; she merely contented herself by observing—

"I don't think Florry dhrinks, at laste not to come up to my good-for-nothink Pat, who spends more than he earns, be it little or much."

She then prepared to set out for the "walk," whilst Kate sauntered down the Hollow with the beads, wondering what she'd get on them, and muttering to herself, in a tone of reproach,—

"Yis, an' indeed it's seldom enough I say them now ; an' it's safe stowed they'll be, that's one comfort."

This and scenes of a similar description crowded through her brain as she slowly walked homewards ; and she was more than once tempted to place the matter in Miss Bradshawe's hands, who she knew was able, and doubted not was willing also, to assist her. Alas, these good resolutions were stifled in the bud, as she remembered the inevitable consequences of such a proceeding would be a return to her duty, and the instant transfer of Daly's affections to her rival, an event more galling to her vanity than feelings. Yet, as Kate was now becoming sufficiently idle, the thought of "sarvice" had lost all its attractions. Wearied by this unprecedented stretch of mental exertion, she wound it up by "laving things to take their own way, an' thin it ud be no fault of hers if they didn't go right," and began to stare about her. Unfortunately, owing to the lateness of the hour, the shops were all closed ; and the girl, thus deprived of one of the greatest sources of her amusement, debated if she had not better go home at once. But on passing one of the largest mansions in —— Square, her attention was arrested by the sounds of music, rendered more audible from the windows being thrown open on account of the heat : within there were innumerable lights, and other unmistakeable signs of revelry ; without, crowds of footmen, linkboys, and idlers of every description. To the latter our heroine hastened to join herself ; and, as carriage after carriage deposited its burden, strove to catch a passing glance of the splendidly-attired and joyous-looking beings, whose fairy forms hovered for a moment

in her sight, and were then lost under the smartly-striped awning which extended from the street-door to the kerb-stone. Oh, how Kate wished those walls had been of glass, that she might catch one little glimpse of the scene within; how she envied the servants, who seemed quite used to it, and on whom all these waving plumes and glittering robes appeared to make no impression! She had determined every carriage should be the last, yet she still lingered; just one peep at that magnificent equipage, and she would go. It stopped, the steps rattled down, an unusual flutter took place amongst the liveried attendants, two gentlemen alighted, of whom Kate took no notice, after them a lady, stately and beautiful, amidst whose raven tresses sparkled such a profusion of brilliants as to dazzle her eyes and produce an involuntary curtsy, as a vague idea flashed across her mind that it must be the queen herself; and last of all tripped a girl whose lovely face Kate felt certain was familiar to her. A short stoppage took place, as the young lady let fall her bouquet, and our heroine had full time to admire the robe of spotless satin, the long auburn curls escaping in every direction from the pearl wreaths which vainly sought to restrain their luxuriance, and, above all, the radiant laughter-loving eyes and bright smile of the Lady Angela Malvern. Another second and she too had passed as a dream; whilst Kate, with a sigh, prepared to depart, unconscious that she herself had attracted the attention of one of the gentlemen of the party. He lingered behind his companions, and as she turned to cast a farewell glance at the gay crowd, accosted her in a somewhat careless tone with, "And where are you going, my pretty one?"

"Sure an' I am goin' home, sir," said Kate, with a smile, in which simplicity and coquetry were so strangely blended as to pique the curiosity of the stranger, whose first address had been merely words of course. He was a tall dignified man, about eight-and-twenty, with a severe cast of features and a proud dark eye, which seemed as if it would penetrate the very soul of the girl, as he again demanded—

"And where is your home? Shall I see you there?"

"Jist beyant in the Buildins, sir, an' you can kum if you like; that is," she added, archly, "if you're not afeard of Florry, for may be it's jealous he'll be."

"I'm not a very great coward," he replied, in a tone, which even to her, unthinking as she was, appeared rather grave; "at any rate I'll see the end of this adventure." He continued to mutter in an undertone, as he went along, something about "the girl being Irish, and of course a Catholic, this boasted religion which inculcates such doctrines and sets forth such examples of purity," and more to the same purpose. Kattie chattered away without noticing the vagueness and brevity of the answers she received, or heeding the sarcastically triumphant smile which played round his mouth, and gave so disagreeable an expression to his countenance. Far different were the feelings which animated the bosoms of the pair thus singularly thrown together. Kate's giddy heart beat high with gratified vanity; and too unused to the world's ways to know to what injurious suspicions her conduct must give rise, she amused herself by picturing how mad Florry would be at a "rale gentleman" seeing her home, and then laughed aloud at the certain surprise of the latter when he found

himself in such a "quare place" as the Buildings. Indeed so fully did she enter into the frolic, that the dying woman, Josephine, all were forgotten; and a row, the probable consequences of her imprudence, was regarded by her as a thing of no moment, so natural to her had become the habits of those amongst whom she resided. The motives of the stranger were, however, more difficult to analyze; in fact, they were a riddle even to himself. His handsome, though, as I before said, severe countenance, certainly evinced no particular admiration for the little Irish girl; on the contrary, impatience at her ceaseless prattle seemed scarcely restrained by a more powerful feeling: he noted with intense interest every word which fell from her lips; although they evidently afforded him little pleasure, for his cheek flushed and his eye kindled as he muttered between his teeth—

"And is it amongst such as these her lot is cast? Is she for ever to be allowed her own headstrong way? I will see this farce to an end, and then we meet again."

"Here we are, sir, jist at the ind of the coort," interrupted Kate, half-doubtful how much farther it was safe to carry her joke; "p'raps it's no nearer you'd betther kum."

"Is it here you live?" he inquired rather abruptly; "nay, as I have come thus far, I'll see you to the door."

"There is no doore," said Kate, simply; "the people tuk it last winther to kindle the fires. I live at the big house below there; but ralely, sir, I'd rayther you'd go back; if the min have been dhrinking, they mightn't be altogether paceable, an' I'd be sorry harm came of it."

"It is my pleasure to go on," he repeated, but in so determined a tone that Kate, heedless as she was, saw she had made a great mistake somewhere ; she looked earnestly in his face ; a stern, determined gaze met hers, and her confusion was complete, as she then remembered, for the first time, there were those in Moll Carty's room who were likely to resent the intrusion of a stranger, especially at an hour when they were almost certain to be assembled. Kate had seen too much lately of Florry's violence not to dread its effects, especially if herself were to be its object. Almost at her wit's end, she yielded to the impulse of the moment, and, trusting to her swiftness of foot and superior knowledge of the locality, darted off at full speed, threading her way through the various groups with which the Buildings, more especially the turn-courts, were still thronged. But Kate had reckoned without her host ; pausing in the doorway to take breath before ascending the stairs of the Large House, she found her pursuer close to her side ; for so intent had the inhabitants been on their own affairs, that he had passed amongst them unnoticed, almost unseen. Terrified half out of her senses, she exclaimed, imploringly—

"Ah, pray now, go back, sir ; there's a woman dying of the cholera above there, an' a lady wid her jist now ; and if ye folly me, there'll be murther this blessed nite."

"The cholera ! a lady !" and he darted a glance full of suspicion at his companion ; "at this hour too. It's of no use, girl ; I'm determined."

"Thin tak' care of the well, an' mind it's not my fault if ye'r intirely kilt ; you'll niver git safe up these

ould crazy stairs, that's one comfort." And springing forward, she was soon lost to sight in the darkness. Not to be baffled, he pressed on, with no other guide than the echo of her footsteps; surmounted the perils of stair and passage, until he reached the long corridor leading to the fortune-teller's domicile.

"What wild-geese chase am I engaged in!" he exclaimed, as, finding himself at fault, he stood, fearful to advance or recede. "Can I ever hope to convince one so wedded to her folly? or will she ever give me credit for the motives which brought me here? A fine story this young wench can make of it, and doubtless will—ha! there she is again." As he spoke, Kate threw open the door of Moll Carty's room; and before the greater part of its inmates were even aware of their entrance, both herself and the stranger stood in the very midst of them.

Had the latter leisure for observation, the varied avocations of the different families must have had to him at least all the attractions of novelty. Biddy Sarchfield, although retired for the night, was sitting bolt upright in her "sittle," sewing a remnant of an old plaid shawl into the tattered corduroys of blind Murphy, who, crouching on his basket, had concealed the absence of those indispensable articles by the petticoat of his sempstress, the materials of which it was composed remaining to this day a mystery, owing to the dust of about twelve months in which it was enshrined. Mrs. Flanagan, like a careful wife, was washing Will's shirt, her own gown, and the childre's little bits of things, herself and husband doing without those necessaries "jist for the time;" whilst their offspring, having been stowed away

under the sack of rags, had crept out here and there, and were sporting in very insufficient clothing at as great a distance as might be from their industrious mother. Moll Carty was, as usual, diving into the future, for the special benefit of Nell Sullivan; whilst such of the men as were at home, Sheehan excepted, were congregated round a small table, covered with short pipes and battered pewter pots, lighted by a solitary rush.

"Sure an' what's all this, Kate?" exclaimed the hostess, throwing down her inseparable companions, the cards; "we thought it was niver coming back you were—"

"Howld yer jaw, you witch!" vociferated Daly, springing to his feet. "Where have you been gadding, Kate? who the divil's this, I'd like to know;" and he advanced fiercely towards the intruder, who, having awoke from his surprise to all the awkwardness of his position, drew himself to his full height, preparing, though without even a cane in his hand, to resist the threatened attack.

"Who I may be, is decidedly no concern of yours," he answered; "and"—he stammered, conscious he was without excuse for his presence where it was neither expected nor desired.

"Musha! an' isn't it a consarn of ours what brings you here, my fine chap?" said Sheehan, rousing himself from a comfortable nap, and observing with a visible satisfaction the absence of his wife. "This is a quare time of night to walk in widout 'By yer lave,' or 'God save all here;' and if you've any particler value for yer bones, take yersilf off in a jiffey; unless you'd

rather the windey nor the doore ; it 'll save time, that's sartain."

"It's no quarrel of yours, Pat," said Florry, in a voice hoarse with passion ; "and you, sir, answer me, did you folly this girl wid her own consint or no ? Ayther way, I'll be the death of you," he continued, almost beside himself ; "but if it's her fault, she'll be sorry for it, that's all."

"Your threats and questions will remain alike unheeded, unanswered ; I shall defend my life as best I may, and I may thank my own folly for placing myself in such a situation."

The calmness of this speech caused his antagonist to hesitate for a moment, which Kate perceiving, eagerly exclaimed—

"Ah ! thin, Florry, wasn't it meeself intirely that was to blame ? I tould the jintleman where I lived, and said he might see me home if he liked."

"You did, you hussy ? then take that for your pains ;" and, infuriated by rage and drink, he dealt her a blow which, though slight, sent her screaming to the side of the bed where Biddy Sarchfield was still quietly ensconced, regarding the affray as got up for her own especial amusement.

"You cowardly scoundrel, how dare you strike the girl ?" exclaimed the stranger, aiming, as he spoke, at the fellow's head ; a compliment the latter dexterously avoided, and catching up a thick stick, prepared to return, with a force which must have proved fatal to his opponent, when Jack Burke, seizing hold of his arm, half-whispered, "Hold, Florry Daly ; I know him : now look at him yourself, man, an' see am I right ?"

"Yes, and I know *you*, you villain!" exclaimed the person alluded to; "I saved your life once, and I believe you are already too well acquainted with the weight of my arm to provoke it a second time."

"Yer honour spakes truth," said Burke, sheepishly, tugging at one of his long ragged-looking locks. "But for you, yer overfed raskil of a flunkiey (wid the nose of an Irish mother, jist to give a quality taste to his fat jowls) ud have sint an ounce of lead to thry the thickness of my skull, whin he found me a wanting to borry the horse; an' sure, though you gave me the sound bating, you didn't take the oath against me, bekaze I promised to refarm; an' so I have: but no one shall touch a button of yer honour's coat, as I'm an honest man."

"That's more than you can promise," growled Daly; "this fine gentleman or nobleman tells no more tales; if I am to be hanged, it shan't be for nothing;" and struggling to rid himself of Burke, he again endeavoured to spring on his antagonist. The latter prepared, as well as he was able, to sustain the shock, though completely unarmed, he was no match for the herculean Irishman. It was, however, with no small surprise that he observed Daly pause midway in his career, start, and hang his head; whilst a simultaneous expression of regret, shame, and apology burst forth from both actors and spectators of the strife. Turning rapidly towards the door, he too gazed on the apparition, as if his whole soul were in that look, his present pallor being rendered more striking by its contrast with the angry flush it had chased from his brow. Still the form which presented itself was no way calculated to excite alarm; it was

the slight figure of a girl, whose snowy robe and elegant, though simple, walking attire, would have alone stamped her as belonging to a very different grade of society from those amongst whom she had thus unexpectedly appeared. Yet it was not this which attracted the attention of the stranger; his gaze was riveted on her face; those regular features, now so pale, you might have deemed them fresh from the sculptor's hands; those dark-blue eyes; the curved, half-disdainful lip; the haughty wave of the head, too natural to offend;—it was surely the same. Time had passed lightly over *her*; and but that her bright curls were now simply parted on her high forehead, and the smile—so sunny and frequent—was no longer there, she differed not from what she had been when he had left her in anger six long years ago!

“Josephine!” “Lord Norville!” burst from the lips of either; whilst Sheehan, irresolute whether to advance or recede, stammered out, “Sure an’, Miss Bradshawe, yer welkim, miss; an’ I hope the noise didn’t scare you; but yer used to the ways av us, anyhow.” His voice recalled the self-possession of Josephine: though ignorant of the cause, her quick eye divined the danger to which the earl had exposed himself; and rapidly advancing into the centre of the room, she placed herself in such a position as effectually to separate Daly from his antagonist.

“Sheehan,” she exclaimed, laying her hand on the sleeve of his tattered coat, “are you aware Winny Pratt is dead?”

“The Lord be marcifal to us!” groaned Biddy Sarchfield, popping her head from under what we may by

courtesy style bedclothes; "an' widout the benefit of the clargy?"

"No, Father Morgan was with her; and it was most fortunate for you all that he did not enter here. Now recollect what I say: she died of the cholera; and if you attempt to wake the body, I will not answer for the consequences."

"Sure but, my lady," said Biddy, "what ud the corse say if it was left widout the frinds, an' what ud the neybours think if they didn't hear the keening?"

"Think you had left off your heathenish practices, for they are no better," answered Miss Bradshawe, with a smile; "at any rate, if you persist in this instance, it will not be without danger to yourselves."

"Josephine," exclaimed Lord Norville, no longer able to keep silence, "are you aware of the character of those amongst whom I find you at this hour? and do you, in the wildest flights of enthusiasm, imagine you can ever benefit such as they are? Your very life is in peril."

"An' who'd hurt her, pray? sure an' I'd like to see him at it. She's as safe as the clargy, an' she knows it too," said Sheehan, eagerly: "but if you're a frind of Miss Bradshawe's, best take yerself off, for the fit 's on Florry yet."

"Daly," exclaimed Josephine, who, whatever her outward composure, really felt apprehensions for the safety of the intruder, "this gentleman is an old acquaintance of mine; how he came here I know not, but for my sake you must drop your quarrel; it is very late, and he will accompany me home."

"For that matther, miss, there's enough of us widout

sich as him," answered Burke, with a glance of ineffable contempt at Lord Norville; "but of course Florry 'll be said by you."

"But you've not heer'd the rights of it yet, my lady," said Daly, on whose passion it was evident Josephine's presence was the only restraint. "Could not that girl be sint of an errand widout bringing this fine chap bolt afther her to my very teeth, an' I jist about to put up the bans too?"

Miss Bradshawe did not answer; but she cast an involuntary glance of surprise, not unmingled with scorn, in the direction of Lord Norville, who, to say the truth, began to cut a very ridiculous figure in the aspect which affairs had now assumed. "Yis, my lady, it's quite thrue," continued Florry, eager to improve his advantage; for, with his natural shrewdness, he had correctly interpreted the look of Josephine; "an' can ye wondher that it made the blood boil up? But I'll have me revinge on him yet."

"Not before me, I hope," said Miss Bradshawe, with a smile; "you must tell me all about it to-morrow. I thought, Mrs. Carty, you had given up those cards."

"Ah, an', me lady, it's meesilf promised it too; an' the divil never laves me in pace night or day; he twists himself round me like a sarpint, as he is, and sets me red-hot wid his breath, till I'm 'bliged to drown meeself undher the pump, for it's all alight I am."

"There's no quiet at all wid the poor craythur," whined Biddy Sarchfield from the bed. "She was choppin' about wid the broken knife all the livelong night; an' didn't she catch houl't of me ragged petti-

coat, an' sware it was the tail o' the baste? An' that minds me, my lady, praps you've an owld one to spare; or, if yer short, maybe you'd pitch into his rivirince for one, for it's not fit for a Christian she's left it on me." This was too much. Josephine smiled; and Lord Norville, despite his chagrin, laughed outright.

"Well, good night to you all," said Miss Bradshawe, as she moved towards the door, accompanied by the earl, and, in obedience to a glance, followed by Pat Sheehan. As soon as they were out of hearing, she inquired of the latter, in a low tone, "Is *he* in danger?"

"Indeed an' he is, my lady. Florry's dark intirely, an' not altogether about the girl ayther. You minded, sir, what Jack Burke said? Daly's not lik the rest on us; we think much of an injury, he never forgives a binifit. But *you* are quite safe, Miss Bradshawe; an' why shouldn't you be, I'd like to know? Sure, if any one touched a hair of yer head, the boys ud limb him."

"*I* safe," answered Josephine; and she mechanically passed her hand through the arm of her companion. There was a tenderness in the tone, an interest in the action, which sent a thrill of joy to the heart of Lord Norville, amply compensating for the annoyance he had endured.

"I'd best go wid you, though," said Pat; "Florry may be afther you wid his mad ways."

"No, stay here and detain him until we have cleared the Buildings," answered Miss Bradshawe.

"Don't go down the Buildins at all, miss; you know the ways of the Hollow; cut through Bryant's stables into the coorte; it's rayther dark, but *you* know the

way. I'll go back an' pick a quarrel wid Florry, jist to keep his hand in, you know."

"Do not make it a real one, mind," said Josephine, whilst Lord Norville pressed a sovereign into the good-natured fellow's palm. His first impulse was to return it; but the recollection of his own trousers and Mary's best gown both at the pawnbroker's, "an' to be relased for the Sinday," conquered his disinterestedness; so he quietly placed in his pocket "the first bit of gould he had iver called cousin."

"Not a word," whispered Josephine, as, firmly holding Lord Norville's hand, she led him with a swift though noiseless step along the dangerous and intricate passages he had so lately traversed. Their natural positions were decidedly reversed, and the earl knew not whether to be mortified or pleased at circumstances which obliged him to depend for protection on a being so frail, so almost childlike in appearance. She, however, allowed him no time for reflection. On reaching the doorway, instead of proceeding down the court, now comparatively deserted, they turned sharp round, and passing through the iron gateway before mentioned, prepared to descend the steps leading to the Hollow. The reader already knows how steep, rugged, and slippery they were at all times; and as the projecting houses by which they were flanked completely intercepted the light of the moon, now also they were in utter darkness.

"For heaven's sake, my dearest girl, where are we going?" inquired her companion, with such real alarm in his tone that Miss Bradshawe could not suppress a low laugh, bringing a flush of vexation to his cheek.

“ A few moments more and all will be right,” she replied. “ These stones are rather uneven, though.”

The trickling of water here again arrested his attention ; and whilst Josephine sprang over the impediment, he had the pleasure of stepping full into the midst of a dirty rivulet issuing from a pipe in a factory-wall, thereby completely saturating his thin shoes and silk stockings. Feeling that the adventure was now partaking largely of the ludicrous, and not at all satisfied with the part he had been destined to play throughout, he resigned himself in sullen silence to his fate, angry with himself, his guide, and the whole world. In this way they proceeded half-way done a dirty ill-paved mews, stumbling now and then over loose stones, masses of broken bricks, and other obstructions, which he was inclined to think were laid purposely in *his* way, as if the little urchins whose playthings they were had ever dreamed the whole world contained such a being as Edgar Earl of Norville, or that he would that night be perambulating the “ Hollow ” in full ball-costume. They paused at length before what appeared to him a hole in the wall, the only distinctly visible object being a heap of wet straw at the mouth of a pit, which imagination painted as unfathomable, and from the depths of which his ears were saluted by a discordant sound peculiar to no animal of which he had any knowledge.

“ Where are we going now ? ” he inquired, almost pettishly ; “ surely there must be a thoroughfare to this dreadful hole.”

“ Yes, but the arch is at present filled by loungers from the public-house, and my white dress would insure a recognition more noisy than welcome.”

"But you are never going into that den ; and what noise is that?"

"Only the old horse ; he is perfectly quiet, good fellow, and knows my voice ; he will not kick, if you do not touch him." So saying, she bounded forward ; and Lord Norville felt himself compelled to follow her example, though not so adroitly but that his feet became entangled in the manure, and he stumbled against the poor animal, who by a tremendous snort testified both his surprise and displeasure at this invasion of his narrow territories. "There is another *very* steep step to mount ; and pray be careful, or you will fall down the kitchen-stairs and wake all the children. I am really sorry, but it is not my fault," said Miss Bradshawe, simply. With a suppressed oath, the step was ascended, then two or three broken stairs, then came a long dark passage, a street-door was pushed open, and at length they stood in a court strongly resembling the one they had quitted, except that it possessed the advantage of a carriage-way, "which was a great thing," as it saved the inhabitants "the thrubble of washing their stones."

Much to the astonishment of the earl, the few remaining loiterers regarded the appearance of Miss Bradshawe as no unusual event, and the repetition of her name as she passed the different groups jarred on his ears. "And she might have been a countess," he soliloquized ; "might have passed through life with no wish ungratified, no care unsoothed, and—" His reflections were abruptly terminated by their finding themselves at the end of the court, and to Lord Norville's astonishment, in the midst of — street. "Is

• it possible!" he exclaimed; "I have passed down this street some thousands of times, and never suspected the existence of such a rookery as this."

"Here, then, we must part, Lord Norville," said Josephine, calmly; "Mrs. Selby will be much alarmed at my protracted absence."

"To you, at least, I might still be Edgar Wellborne," he exclaimed, bitterly; "unlike yourself, I do not *pretend* indifference."

Josephine moved onwards without reply; but before she had proceeded half a dozen steps, he was again by her side. "Miss Bradshawe," he continued, in a decisive tone, "you do not escape me thus; do you suppose I will allow you to walk unprotected through the streets of London at this hour? and how could I answer to Lord Lindore for humouring such gross imprudence?"

"*Imprudence!*" answered Josephine, archly, as her companion drew her hand forcibly through his arm; and they proceeded in the direction of Mrs. Selby's abode.

"I understand your meaning, but must defer an explanation of my share in this night's adventure until a more fitting time. Yet, Josephine, promise me, at least till we meet again, you will not expose your life amongst those uncivilized barbarians; Edgar Wellborne may ask that which would most probably be denied to the Earl of Norville."

"I seek no explanation, my lord, of what concerns me not; I make no promises to avoid a danger which does not exist. Betwixt these people, wild as they

appear, and myself, there is a tie which nothing would induce them to violate."

"A tie? a tie between the very refuse of Ireland, the dross of London, and the niece of the Earl of Lindore?—you are surely mad, or jesting."

"Yes, the tie of religion; a link which those of the Reformed Church do not appreciate, or even understand. Now tell me candidly, would you consider Angela safe amongst Protestants of the same class as those we visited to night?"

"I am sure her father would not," said Lord Norville, changing colour; "and to be sincere with you, Josephine, it is not from the people, bad as they are, that I anticipate danger."

"From what then?" she inquired, half-playfully: "do you expect I shall fall down some of those steps or pits which you encountered so unwillingly to-night?"

"I expect nothing of the kind, wilful girl; I dread that awful disease which has already commenced its ravages through our land, and which, from the dirty and dissipated habits of the poor, is sure to fix its stronghold amongst them."

"Ay, *that* indeed!" she answered solemnly. "Yet as the martyrs of the olden time shrank not from the rack or scaffold, so must we not shrink from the performance of our duty, however painful, nay dangerous, it may be; it is the will of Almighty God: and was I not equally under his protection by the bedside of that dying woman as had I remained idly at home? Yet, trust me, the cholera will not be confined to the poor alone; if it proceeds from an im-

pure atmosphere, London is so thoroughly intersected by places even worse than these, that we can never hope to escape."

"I fear me not," said Lord Norville with a sigh; "yet, Josephine, since you Catholics are so fond of a sermon, tell me is it not selfish to rend the hearts of those who love you by thus rashly exposing yourself? Be a Romanist if you will, but do not cease to be a rational being."

"Years have indeed added to your prudence, Edgar," she replied. The name had been pronounced involuntarily, and she would gladly have recalled it; but it was too late: the evil was done; and she felt the hand he held pressed to her companion's heart.

"God bless you, my Josephine, for that one word! You have not, then, become the cold, heartless being we believed? you have not yet forgotten—"

"The word escaped from the mere force of habit," she eagerly interrupted; "for the rest, I assure you my actions and feelings are in perfect accordance, nor do I see how either can or ought to interest the affianced husband of my cousin. But I am nearly exhausted, and would rather perform the remainder of our short journey in silence." He did not answer, and both appeared lost in a profound reverie, until they reached the door at which they were to part. The time had been employed by Josephine in earnest mental prayer; she was conscious of the temptation to which she was exposed; it had, therefore, lost half its danger; yet the wounds of her heart had been reopened; and as she offered her sufferings to her God, she turned towards His mild and compassionate Mother

to pray for and to pity her. For Lord Norville, the subject of his meditations may be guessed; since, on relinquishing Miss Bradshawe's hand, he passionately exclaimed, "Of one thing rest assured, Josephine,—I shall never be the husband of Lady Angela Malvern." He turned away; and whilst Josephine, overcome by fatigue, calmly slept, he paced up and down the street, scarcely conscious of what he was about. Two Josephines flitted before him. The one as he had last beheld her in that old hall, the abode of her ancestors, with her young heart his alone, yet at the call of duty severing with her own hand the links by which they were united. The other Josephine, no longer his, a calm, placid being, who acted, thought (was even apparently happy), without the slightest reference to him; the face seemed the same, the form slighter, more girlish, than ever: and it was evident that whatever feeling might yet linger in her bosom, it was subordinate, and only sufficient to relieve her from the charge of insensibility; she was a free agent too, not the blind tool he had thought to find her; too content with her present position to waste one sigh on what she had sacrificed. Of this, Lord Lindore had often assured him; but he never believed it, and he even now sought to stifle a conviction so unflattering to his self-love. How should he act? A bright though intruding figure solved this question for him. The youthful, high-born Angela, with her light heart and all the dazzling loveliness of her mother's Italian ancestors, must ever stand betwixt himself and Josephine. Ah, why was this engagement ever entered into? It had pleased Lord Lindore little, himself less; Angela had scarce been consulted at all; Lord Norville must marry some

one: so, somehow or other, the countess had it all her own way. Still he was resolved. At this moment a policeman, who had for some time past been watching his movements, not altogether approving of his lengthened promenade in so confined a space, requested him to move on; and Lord Norville reluctantly obeyed.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MARRIAGE.

SINCE the incidents recorded in the foregoing chapter, many were the good resolutions made by our heroine—made, alas, only to be broken! A hundred times had she “been off wid Florry,” a hundred times determined to give herself up to the priest; yet Lent had long passed, and her resolutions were still as the tree which, though loaded with foliage and blossom, produces no fruit. To Lent succeeded Easter; that too passed away. The indulgence was over, and Kate had neglected to approach the Sacraments, though it was not without a pang of remorse she found herself what is so emphatically termed “an out-church Catholic.” But the girl was young in sin; it would not sit lightly at her heart; and to all Nell Sullivan’s assurances that she would think nothing of “sich a thrifle” by-and-by, she only answered by a shake of the head and a deep-drawn sigh. It was a consolation—a miserable one, it is true, but still a consolation—to have others deem so lightly of her neglect; and although her not yet scared

conscience bore testimony to the fallacy of their palliations, she eagerly sought the company of those who offered them, hoping thereby to stifle its upbraidings.

"It's av no use moping in that way, Kattie," said Florry Daly, as he found her one morning standing by the window, her hands idly clasped, and the big tears, as usual, coursing each other down her pale cheeks. "What's done can't be undone, if you cried quarts; an' see the purty face you're afther spiling now. But answer me, once for all: do you intend to have me or not? becaze if you don't, there are those that will, an' not wait to be asked twice ayther." Kate hesitated; and Florry, seeing his advantage, continued: "It doesn't shute me to be longer widout a wife an' a smoke of me own, for raisons I have. The end room where Winny Pratt died 's to be let reasonable; for why? they're all afeard of the cholera. I'll take it, an' get the bits of sticks together as may be. The Brnkes will lodge wid us; an' if that's not betther than bein' plagued night an' day wid Moll Carty's thricks an' dhrunken vagaries, I'm not the boy I take meesilf for, that's all. Come, Kate, be a good girl; say yis at once, an' lave off this whimpering."

"But, Florry, the praste! I'm afeard to go near him, an' me afther neglecting my Easter dooty too."

"Thin don't go, my girl; stop a bit, an' you can mak a clane breast all at once, as it were."

"He'll niver marry us that way, Florry. I wish I'd taken owld Murphy's advice, an' it ud all be over by now; an' rarely I can't guess what you'll do ayther." This was said innocently and simply, but the tempter was at no loss for a reply.

"Oh, as to me, Kattie, me darlin', it's out of the question my thrying to face the clargy at prisint, so you must be said by me; we'll jist git married in church; the parson 'll do it widout any bother, an' we'll tell the praste of it aftherwards."

"Is it the parson you said?" inquired poor Kate, in a very doleful tone.

"Why, you needn't look so scared; hav'n't I min-tioned it many times before? Now, jist humour me, a cushla, an' you'll see what a downright elligant husband I'll make; an' the first money I airn I'll buy you a red plaid shawl, that'll make Nell Sillivan cry wid spite; an' you shall be married wid a ring of your *own*, let me get it where I will."

"See that now," she answered, with half a smile. "I don't know what to do, Florry. To be sure, one scoldin's betther than two, an' they say Father Morgan preached very seavare last Sunday night to those who hadn't been to their dooty this Easter; an' thin, to be sure, when I'm married, I needn't hurry meeself; I'll have time to prepare properly; an' praps, if I wint now, it's ownly putting me off he'd be, an——"

"In coorse, you needn't plague yerself till next year, an' thin you'll have yer own room an' yer own lodgers, an' Moll Carty not always tazing you about that paltry thrifle of rent, the owld morodin' vagabone!"

"That's throe for you," said Kate, whose scruples Daly had at length almost succeeded in removing; "an' it's tired enuff I am of Moll Carty's droll ways; an' for Nelly, there's small love between the pair of us."

"Sure you'll let her be your bridesmaid, Kate, jist to vex her; an' the Burkes 'll go wid us, becaze I can

eram their mouths, an' the rest ud ownly be pratin' about the parson, an it ud come to the ears of the clergy."

"But what 'll Mary say?" inquired Kate, dubiously.

"Never mind what she says; you're a dale more cute than her, though she's ten years older. Now you look like yersilf again, so I'll tell you a bit of a sacrate: its jist meesilf that put up the bans unknownt, an' they'll be out nixt Sunday, an' we'll have it over on Monday, plaze God. An' now, do come an' take a peep at the room, an' thin sit about scouring a bit. I've a particler frind 'll lend us a bed, an' in less than no time it 'll be fit for the king himself."

Kate had already yielded too much to make more than a very feeble opposition; her disposition, naturally pliant, had, when deprived of the stay of religion, become a mere reed, ready to be bent and twisted whenever it suited the convenience of one so unprincipled as Daly. Yet he really felt some sort of affection for Kattie; he was prond of her beauty, and prized her genuine artlessness just in proportion as his own character partook of its opposite. He also fully intended what he, promised, namely, to be kind and indulgent to her; but he had forgotten to take into account his natural violence of character, which when stimulated by the effects of his almost nightly inebriation, produced paroxysms verging on insanity. Kate knew all this, but, like most inexperienced girls, flattered herself "it ud be all right whin they were married; and she didn't mind the jealousy, as long as he didn't sthrike her agin, an' frighten the wits out of

her." That she indeed must have few wits left, was the unanimous opinion of the wiser and older inhabitants of the Buildings; and when it was understood that the sun which rose so cloudless on that fair June morning ushered in Kate Gearey's wedding-day, her almost-forgotten friend, Mrs. Casey, gave audible vent to her discontent, whilst kindling a few sticks under the broken saucepan in which she was warming the cup of "tay for Jim, before goin' out wid the stall." "Well, I'm sure," soliloquized the good dame, "I thought Jim an' meeself were the biggest fules in creashion; but thin I was desaved: I was tould it was a scholard he was, and whin I found he ownly put the crass in the book, it was intirely too late. But this child! poor thing! if Jim would have bided in the 'house,' it ud niver have come to pass. It's nayther chick nor bird av Moll Carty's hatchin' that turned up good. But I didn't believe she was such an omadhaun, ayther; it's a sorry weddin' whin yer good angel stands weeping at the doore of the *church* (as they calls it). Well, she's made her bed, an' she must lie in it. Here, Jim, take yer tay;" and Mrs. Casey soon forgot her chagrin whilst administering his morning meal to her now bedridden husband.

A bright sunshiny morning in London is a melancholy thing; the dry dusty road literally smoking under the contents of the water-carts; the glaring white pavements; the long narrow streets, where one vainly seeks a shady side, and gasps for a breath of fresh air; the few yellow, parched plants, so ostentatiously displayed in long balconies and parlour windows, obstinately defying all the endeavours of the patent water-

ing-pot to preserve a five minutes' verdure; and worse than all, the large formal squares, where the grass has long since attained the dingy colour of washed-out nankin. As' to the people one meets, they are invariably cross and tired, with faces not unlike beet-root in a salad-bowl; the very dogs seem making a voyage of discovery to the nearest pump; there is a great demand for ices; and a few ill-fated bipeds pant and struggle under the weight of substantial dowagers making the tour of the inner circle of the Regent's Park in an invalid chair. If such be the effect on those who are more used to the city than to the country, what must it have been to one whose whole life, the last few months only excepted, had been passed in a land probably more favoured by nature than any other in the world?

Something of all this pressed on the heart of Kate, as she stood at the window and gazed out on the "Hollow." She was looking very pretty in her clean cotton dress, nicely washed and ironed for the occasion by Mary Sheehan, who, however, steadily refused to accompany her to church. Her bonnet was certainly the worse for wear, and the dingy white ribbons had been evidently picked up a bargain at some of those emporiums of second-hand finery with which London abounds; but the bonnet was not yet on, and Kate's bright tresses, smoothly twisted round her little head, gave it an elegant, even classical appearance. The red plaid shawl, too, lay on the bed beside her; yet she heeded it not. Her eyes filled with tears, and her thoughts were at that moment in the little cabin on the banks of the Awbeg,—her heart with Father Phelim. The whole of

that long summer-morning she had been trying not to think, but it would not do : had it been wet, foggy, anything but what it was, she might have succeeded ; but now there was something in the clear azure sky which reminded her, whilst her eyes were fixed on it, of her distant home, of her mother's gentle voice and soft melancholy eyes ; and her guardian angel whispered "It is not too late." One prayer, one little aspiration, might have saved her even then—plucked her from the very verge of ruin ; but, alas ! Kate had lost the habit of prayer. She looked downwards—the spell was dissolved : in lieu of the verdant valley of Castletown, she beheld the dirty and unsightly mews, the round stones glowing in the scorching sun like so many spectres standing there to dazzle and blast the sight ; even the little muddy stream was dried up ; no solitary nook was in shadow ; every object stood revealed in its native ugliness, and ugly enough they were. At the bottom of the steps was a group of rough, dirty children, mostly boys, quarrelling, fighting, and struggling for the possession of a poor little sparrow, which was confined by a string attached to one of its legs, and to which, by way of sport, they allowed a moment's liberty, and then pulled it violently back again. Their oaths and imprecations during this pastime would have been considered a disgrace by men three times their age ; in fact, the point of rivalry seemed to be, who should excel in their knowledge, not of mere slang only, but of the foulest blasphemy, which was freely bandied from one young mouth to another. Just at this moment a boy, older than any of them, but with a remarkably simple cast of countenance,

descended the steps, bearing in his hand a small basket full of primroses and violets, and attempted to pass through them. This was no other than the grandson of blind Murphy; who, though distinguished in the Buildings as the "natral," was yet a universal favourite from his quiet, inoffensive disposition, and the cheerful, unabated perseverance with which he wandered about the streets all day and late into the night, hoping by the product of his little wares to add to the comforts of his poor old grandfather, on whom he literally doted. It was evident Phil was very proud of the treasures his basket contained; he had trudged many a long and weary mile before it was light, to procure them. They and himself were both laid out to the best advantage; his old tattered clothes were stitched here and there; his face washed, and he had borrowed a "taste of Jack Burke's brush jist to betther" the appearance of the apologies for shoes, which were secured by packthread on his poor blistered feet; a few blue-bells ornamented his cap, and a large bunch of buttercups (the other flowers were too costly) graced his button-hole. A satisfied simper pervaded his countenance as, catching a glimpse of Kate at the window, he stood on tiptoe and kissed his hand more than once. His appearance was most opportune: the unfortunate bird had just expired in the hands of its tormentors, and their brutality was now transferred to as safe, because as harmless, an object.

"Irish! Irish!" was the exulting exclamation; and as this was an epithet universally applied by the pupils of the ragged-school to the boys of the Buildings, it became evident the proceedings were about to assume a national character.

Phil gathered himself up : like all of weak intellect, he had a great dislike to be laughed at ; but the recollection of his precious charge checked any outward demonstration of anger, and with a comical assumption of dignity he prepared to proceed on his way.

" Irish ! Irish ! I would not be Irish if it was ever so," repeated his persecutors. Phil paused, his cheek became very red ; but he remembered blind Murphy's snuff-box hadn't a grain in it, so he pressed forward in silence.

" I say, Phil, what did you pay the priest for white-washing you ?" asked one of the ringleaders in a jeering tone.

" It's a lie ! whoever told you that," exclaimed the boy, standing quite still, although grasping his basket very tightly.

" Do you give me the lie, you Bible-hating Papist ? Which of you was it that dashed the tract in the face of that 'ere cove of a missionary that goes among you, just as if the H Irish ad souls to be sav'd at hall, eh, Ned ?" and he gave a very knowing wink, or rather a leer, at one of his companions.

" Yea, verily, they threatened to hang the holy man to the lamp-post," answered the young gentleman addressed, with a strong nasal twang, turning up the whites of his eyes in a manner which elicited peals of mirth from his companions, and might have been mistaken for an imitation of the said missionary expounding the Scriptures at the Sabbath-evening school, where Master Ned regularly attended.

" What a lark it ud be if ve lugged that ere chap into the school, and sent him home an out-an-out Pro-

testant, wouldn't it though? I shouldn't wonder to see him preaching on a tub yet, all for the benefit of his benighted brethren's precious souls."

"He'd cut a capital figure of fun, an' I'd hold the hat and gather the ha'pence. Come on, my fine chaps; he shall hear the Bible for once in his life;" and the elder boys prepared to seize poor Phil, whilst the younger capered around, delighted with the sport, though not exactly knowing what it was all about.

The "innocent" struggled manfully, shouting for assistance; but before Kate had time to summon any one able to render it, his basket was snatched from him, and its contents first scattered on the ground, then savagely trampled under foot by his assailants. This was too much: he ceased to resist, and covering his face with his hands, burst into an agony of tears. So passive a victim soon ceased to afford amusement to the young ruffians; one by one they departed, Ned picking up a large flint, and hurling it as he did so at the still sobbing Phil. Kate uttered a shriek; and just as one or two of the men hastened down the steps to his assistance, the affectionate yet excitable creature fell on the lowest, bathed in his own blood. He was borne insensible to the large room, and laid on one of the settles. Kate, however, was hurried by Florry from amongst the crowd who gathered round him; whilst Nell Sullivan sneeringly remarked, "She had better make a little more haste, if it was married this mornin' she mint to be." When they had cleared the mouth of the Buildings, Jack Burke felt her sink heavily on his arm: he looked in her face, it was deadly pale; and in answer to their inquiries, she pointed to her left hand,

on which was a deep red stain fresh from the temples of poor Phil Murphy. Miss Sullivan laughingly wiped it off with her handkerchief ; the girl tried to smile, but an unaccountable gloom had taken possession of the whole party, and they proceeded in silence to the church. This little incident had not, however, escaped the observation of Norry ; as Kate passed the stall, she pursed up her lips, drew her feet under her, and clutching the bride's dress with her shrivelled hand, exclaimed eagerly—

“ Kattie, avourneen, be ruled by me ; sure an' it's an ill omen intirely. Go back wid you, me darlin' ; an' don't you let the ring go where the red blood is scarce dhry ; there's nayther luck nor grace 'll folly where you're goin', that's sartain ;” and she continued mumbling to herself long after they were out of sight.

Kate's depression was of short duration ; she busied herself in conjecturing what sort of place a Protestant church could possibly be, what she would have to say and do, when her cogitations were terminated by their coming in sight of a handsome, lofty edifice, with a gravel-walk in front, divided from the road by light iron palisades, whilst on the remaining three sides it was surrounded by a garden with fine trees, now in full verdure and beauty. Kattie was awe-stricken, and following her companions in silence, ascended the steps. After pushing aside the doors of crimson cloth thickly studded with nails of shining brass, the whole party stood in the nave of the building. Kate looked about in vain for the holy-water stoup ; and not finding it, crossed herself devoutly, to the great annoyance of the bridegroom-elect, and the infinite amusement of the

woman who was dusting the seats and shaking up the luxurious cushions in the high, comfortable-looking pews.

"Remember where you are, Kate," whispered Florry, with some annoyance in his tone; "come, make haste: I wonder where the parson is!" he exclaimed; and addressing a portly, red-faced functionary, he explained his errand in a few words, seconding his argument, to Kate's great astonishment, by a coin, which, unless her eyes deceived her, bore a strong resemblance to half-a-crown. "Sit down and wait a bit," said the man, with a sort of surly politeness. "I s'pose one of the curates will be disengaged directly: this way, my dear," and he favoured our heroine with a prolonged stare, which would have put her completely out of countenance, had she not been engaged looking about for the altar, and wondering where it could possibly be. True, there was something at the end which was rather like one, but there was no tabernacle, no lights, no sanctuary-lamp, no images of saints; and she would have been completely puzzled to know its use, and find out what they did there, when she made what she considered a grand discovery.

"Ah, look now, Florry!" she exclaimed eagerly; "an' it's quare ideas the Pradestants have of their saints, any way. Sure an' how can they mintion that beautiful image of the Blessed Virgin in our own Catholic chapel (which makes us think of our prayers when our heads ud be runnin' on follies) in the same breath wid those ugly-looking bastes that are jist murtherin' one another, an' ud scare me out of my wits if I were to meet thim alone!"

"We do not worship the Virgin Mary, young woman," said the pew-opener, pompously ; "nor do we dethrone the Creator to exalt the creature : we allow no graven images in our churches, no statues of Popish saints."

"Thin are those strange figures the pictures of *Pradestant* saints?" inquired Kate ; "why they're jist like them things I saw outside the shows at the fair. I dar'n't say my prayers before them ; bekase," she added, as if fearful of giving offence, "I'm feer'd they'd not mind me to be humble an' obedient, like our own dear Lady ;" and her eyes involuntarily filled with tears.

"Why, the girl's an idiot !" said the beadle, with more indulgence than he might have manifested had the offender been less pretty. "One would think she had never been inside a church before : bless your heart, that be's the royal arms of England, and those be's the lion and unicorn." Our little heroine was as wise as ever ; but the entrance of the curate who was to perform the ceremony terminated the dialogue, fortunately before the religious zeal of the female official had been thoroughly aroused.

The minister was a young man, evidently in a great hurry, and out of humour at having to do duty out of his turn ; he had been invited to a *déjeûner* at Twickenham, where he was to meet a lady into whose good graces he fancied he had polka'd himself the preceding evening, and with whose hand he hoped to obtain a tolerable slice of church preferment. Scarcely deigning to cast a glimpse at the party, he addressed the beadle :

"Going to be married, Mr. Townley ? Ah, well !

Very provoking; can't be helped though. Get it over as soon as possible; no time to be lost: come along. Catholics, eh? I thought so;" and hurrying into the vestry, he returned without loss of time in a very dirty white gown, and standing by the rails of the Communion-table, hurried over a form of words which, though they *were* English, Kate neither heard nor understood. It certainly claimed no affinity to a "religious rite," much less to any marriage she had ever assisted at; but when she found the ring on her finger, and was told she was the wife of Florry Daly, the sin of which she had been guilty seemed to strike her in its full enormity; hanging down her head, she burst into a passionate flood of tears.

"What's the girl crying for?" asked the clergyman, as he prepared to enter their names in the register which was kept in the vestry.

"Becaze I've lost all the binifits of the Sacrament, an' can niver git them now; an' sure how'll I expict to prosper at all?"

"Benefits of the Sacrament? why, you foolish girl, who ever heard of marriage being a Sacrament? But I forgot—you are a Romanist, and I hav'n't time to waste talking now. Let me see: Kate Gearey, spinster, aged seventeen; Florry Daly, bachelor, aged twenty-eight."

"No, sir; it's a widower I am."

"Widower? Indeed! Now sign your names, and do pray be quick." All, Daly excepted, protested their inability. The bride and witnesses having accordingly affixed their crosses, the clergyman hurried away, leaving the wedding-party to follow as they pleased. On

quitting the church, our heroine breathed more freely ; and but for the ring, would have had some difficulty in persuading herself the whole was not an illusion. Daly, on whose arm she now leant, was unusually thoughtful ; but Burke and Nelly rattled away, talking enough for all. When they reached the corner of the square, Norry was no longer at her post ; a circumstance which, though almost unprecedented, Kate attributed to the old woman's not wishing to see them return. On entering the Buildings, she quickened her pace, as Phil Murphy's accident flashed across her mind ; her impatience becoming at last so great that she let drop Florry's arm, and rapidly ascending the stairs, reached the room where he lay before the others were hardly aware of her absence. A confused clamour of voices saluted her ear, and some strange ceremony was evidently proceeding, in which Moll Carty was the presiding priestess. Motionless, and ghastly from loss of blood, the boy was stretched at full length on the bed ; by his side crouched his old blind grandfather, the very image of meek resignation, the big tears escaping from his sightless lids, and coursing each other in rapid succession down his furrowed cheeks. Mary Sheehan, Biddy Sarchfield, and Mrs. Casey stood around, all eyes engaged watching the operations of the Sibyl ; though the tongues of both Mary and Norry loudly proclaimed their disbelief in her skill. The patient's chest was bare ; on it the fortune-teller had placed a penny, supporting an end of lighted candle, and the whole was covered with a broken tumbler. On this she continued to gaze with intense interest, muttering some gibberish, which she informed her auditors was

the charm. "Wait till the candle burns out, thin give me the nine coppers, Murphy, an' it's yersilf 'll see the bone riz ; an' it 'll be done the nine mornins, an' thin it's meesilf 'll warrant the cure." The broken-hearted man, almost in his dotage, fumbled in his pocket for the few pence ; and although they were his last, placed them in the hand of the crone ; whilst Mrs. Sheehan impatiently exclaimed, "It's not nine days, or nine hours ayther, he'll be alive, if you don't stay the bleeding ; best sind to the house for a dochter, an' lave this fuling ; for its a praste you'll soon be wanthing, or my name's not Mary Sheehan."

"A praste ud spile the *charm*," interrupted Mrs. Carty, in an oracular tone ; "it ud be more convaniant if he were moved into the little room there, an' he'd be out of the merry-making to-night ; for Florry 'll trate us all, av course."

"There's some sinse in that," said Norry ; "but for yer docthering, Mrs. Carty, me father's ould cow ud know betther than to cure a broken head by making a light-house o' the chist." This difference of opinion, which might have terminated as most Irish differences do, was cut short by the men, who, lifting the mattress, conveyed the poor sufferer tenderly enough into the inner room, laying him on the bed hitherto occupied by Kate Gearey.

Mrs. Carty's prophecy was fulfilled : Florry did "trate them" all that night ; and the scene of action was redolent not alone of tobacco and beer, but of whisky-punch itself ! Blind Murphy was, however, absent—he remained fixed by the side of his boy ; and even the bride herself was to be seen oftener hovering

round the couch of the patient creature, with whom she was an especial favourite, than filling the post of honour assigned her as mistress of the revels.

"Kattie, child ! jist see if it's asleep he is," said old Murphy, humbly ; " he feels very still intirely, but I hav'n't the use of the eyes : how does he look now, darlin' ? "

" He luks very pale, Murphy, an' breathes quite softly. What did the docther say to Pat ? "

" He said he'd call when he came his rounds to-morrow ; so I sint for Father Morgan ; for it's in great dread of the nite I am. But don't you stay here, Kattie, for may be it 'll anger Florry ; an' if he changes, it's jist convaniant you are. "

Kate reluctantly departed ; though as she sipped the punch poured out for her by the bridegroom, her thoughts wandered still to the next room, and her eyes filled with tears as she wondered what blind Murphy would be able to do without his grandson.

" It's a burryin', not a weddin', you seem to have been at to-day, *Mrs. Daly*," said Nell, pertly, and with a marked emphasis on the name. " Thrubbles 'll come soon enough, I'll warrant, widout yer meeting thim half way. "

" It ud be more to yer credit, Nell, if you demaned yersilf more dacently, an' poor Phil Murphy dying in the nixt room to you : it's no feelin' you iver had excipt for yersilf ; an' that's not overmuch, if we may guess by yer conduct. "

" Yer right, Mary," said Pat, approvingly ; " I hope God 'll reward you, Kate ; but for the young rascal who pitched the stone, I'll be even wid

him, an' tache him to murther an honest man's child."

"You'd betther wait till yer sober, Pat Sheehan," said his wife impressively. Thus admonished, her lord and master hung his head, although the discussion was angrily carried on by the rest, Phil being, as we have already said, beloved by them all.

"This kums of havin' them whinin', cantin' mis-sioners amongst us," said Jack Burke; "an' I tell you once for all, Mrs. Flanagan, if I catch any o' them here, I'll not lave a whole bone in his skin; I'll sarve them as Maurice Kelley did last Sunday, an' no mistake."

"How was that?" inquired Florry; "Maurice isn't one to be thricked or talked over, that's sartain."

"Why, you know, Maurice lives in a garret in the turn-court, an' has as fine an attic full of childre as you'd meet in a bright summer's day. Now, you see, the school in the 'Hollow' wasn't so well attinded as they wished; the childre were here to-day an' gone to-morrow; an' though they talked big enough of the numbers that kum into the school, they forget, somehow, to mintion how many go out of it. They've done all they could lately, to be shure: they tould lies of the clargy, poked books undher the doores, invited all the def ould women to have the Scripters read to them, still they couldn't manage Maurice. At last they got a pracher who calls himself Irish, an' says he, 'Me fine chaps, blud's thicker than wather; I'll convart all the Grakes, and Cockneys too, you'll see.' So he packed a bundle of Scripters undher his arm, an' there's scarce a hole in the coorte where he hasn't intrhroduced himsilf,

in an' out, like a hen on a hot griddle ; an' whin the peeples are sick, he watches till the neybour's are gone, thin in he pops, whips out his book, and bawls away like a good 'un : so the min all vowed to duck him in the well, if they ever caught him. Well, on Sunday he bided his time ; he thought Kelley was out, an' determined to thry his luck wid the ould woman an' childre ; up he sneaked two pair of stairs, an' knocks quite softly at the doore. It seems no one heer'd it ; so he opened it, an' takin' off his hat, was jist goin' to open his mouth too, whin who should he see but Maurice feedin' his youngest child wid bacon an' cabbage, an' no bad thing ayther. Maurice stared a moment, 'down wid the girl off his knee, up wid his fist, an' bolt to his visiter. The missioner was a thrifle surprised, an' not havin' a spache ready, 'pitched a tune.' So Kelley, not wantin' music, kicked him down the two flights into the coorte, he singin' all the time, though he cut fast enuff whin his feet touched dhry land."

"What's he like ?" inquired Florry, laughing.

"Like himself, to be sure ; folkes do say he was a Catholic once, an' that makes the people more bitter against him."

Muttered threats against missioners, ragged-schools, and all who allowed their children to frequent them, "pawning their sowls to the divil, becaze they hadn't courage to sell thim outright," were aimed at Mrs. Flanagan, who sat in bodily fear her husband might illustrate his arguments in a manner more forcible than pleasing, when a gentle rap at the door occasioned a momentary pause among the orators, whose eloquence had been considerably improved by the frequency and

strength of their potations. Though not at the moment gifted with remarkable clearness of vision, they could yet discern the intruder to be a stranger, below the middle height, with a profusion of chestnut hair, mild blue eyes, and a peculiarly unassuming and pleasing expression of countenance; he was very young too, and certainly unaccustomed to so noisy an assembly as that he now encountered.

"Talk of the divil, his horns appear," roared Burke, springing to his feet. "By St. Patrick, it's the missioner; I seed him in the Buildings jist now. Turn him out, boys! turn him out!" and some words were exchanged in Irish which sent the blood from the cheeks of Kate.

"Is there not a sick person here?" inquired the stranger, endeavouring to advance.

"Hear that, now," ejaculated Sheehan. "His tongue's thruer than his heart, I'll warrant."

"How long is it since you cast your skin?" inquired Burke, seconding the question by an energetic shove, which caused the slight frame at which it was levelled to reel for a moment.

"For whom do you take me?" he gently asked. "I came to see one Phil Murphy, who is ill."

"For a Methodist baste, you desaiver—an' tak *that* for your pains;" and Florry in his turn aimed a blow, which, but for his own unsteadiness, would have proved a severe one.

"One word, my men," continued the stranger, firmly; "you have been drinking; but I tell you at once, I am a Catholic priest, come to see the sick man." There was a momentary lull; but, Daly, further gone and

more reckless than the rest, answered, "Yer no sich thing: don't I know all the clargy, God bless them! an' do you think it's the likes of me that ud touch a praste? God forbid! I'll pay you off for that lie with the rest, you parvarting vagabond! Where's Father Morgan, thin?"

"Father Morgan is ill," answered the young man. "If you kill me, I must do my duty" and he moved towards the door of the inner room.

"An' you don't go that way, my boy," said Jack Burke, exchanging another short sentence in Irish with Daly. Kate sprang forward, and hurriedly exclaimed:

"For the love of the Blessed Virgin, not that way, sir! or they'll have you into the well; the dhrink's in thim to-nite."

The intended victim crossed himself devoutly: that action saved his life. The ringleaders drew back, though Florry, who had not heeded it, kicked out with such force, that, losing his balance, he fell backwards, and was rendered harmless, at least for the moment. It was at this time the outer door opened, and Maurice Kelley, who had been invited to the feast, entered with evident surprise at the warlike aspect of the revellers.

"Come here, Maurice Kelley, an' tell us is this the pracher?" said Sheehan, rather dubiously.

"The pracher?" exclaimed Kelley, taking off his hat respectfully; "why, man alive, it's Father Horton. Long life to your riverince!"

"Father Horton? a praste! *an' I sthruck him!*" said Burke, falling on his knees, and thumping his breast. "Oh, yer riverence, forgive me, an' I promise

to chop off the hand that was riz against the clargy, for it's no good it 'll iver do me agin."

"That were indeed useless," said the young priest, kindly; "for your conduct to myself I have nothing to forgive, since it proceeded from a mistake; but you must ask pardon of Almighty God for offending him by such scenes as the présent, and a fellow-creature so near to you on the verge of eternity."

"An'," stammered Florry, trying to rise, "I promise nixt time yer riverince visits us, to take you on my back an' carry you over the coorte, like a baste that I am, for kicking you."


"Your legs do not at present seem capable of supporting yourself. Now be as quiet as you can; and may God bless and reform you all." The door closed behind Father Horton; and when he returned, a good hour afterwards, most of the men were snoring on the floor, their slumbers enduring until late the following morning. The bride and Mary watched with the blind old man by the suffering Phil; and so ended the day of Kate Gearey's ill-omened marriage.

CHAPTER X.

THE BURGLARS.

A MONTH—that fairy month commonly known as the honeymoon—was over; but its wings, about which poets have sung and novelists raved, had been in Kate Gearey's, or, as we must in future style her, Mrs Daly's particular case very leaden indeed; besides which, had

she been a scholar, it would have puzzled her to find a word in the dictionary sufficiently bitter to express the state of her feelings during these four weeks, the first of her married life. In common parlance, she had done a very foolish thing, and one which she would have given worlds to undo. For a short time Florry had been tolerably kind; he had bought her some trifling presents, and, to Kate's surprise, did not seem to want for money; he was at home all day long, nor did he stir even in the evening until the Burkes returned, when Jack and he usually went out together for about an hour. In about ten days the scene changed; a stranger was added to their party, their whispered conversations being either stretched far into the night, or, what was still worse, Daly and the two Burkes would accompany him to the neighbouring public-house; when they did return, all three generally appearing the worse for liquor. To this stranger, who was no other than Ned Pratt, the young wife had a decided objection; there was something fearfully mysterious in the control he appeared to exercise over his companions; even Daly, otherwise so ungovernable, was but a puppet in his hands, in and out at his beck, like one under the influence of supernatural agency, although it was evident that he winced beneath the curb, like an impatient steed who longs to free himself, yet knows not how to set about it. Perhaps if there was one whom Pratt treated with anything bordering on kindness, it was herself; he would say she reminded him of "his own lost girl;" and even when Florry's money was all gone, he would lend him a trifle, unasked, to "get a cup of tea for his little wife;" and he had more than once interposed



between her and her husband's drunken rage, an interference no other dared exercise.

Kate had hoped, when once she had a room of her own, her society would have been also of her own choosing; but in this she was mistaken. The Sheehans, Mrs. Casey, Murphy, and even the imperfectly recovered Phil, were carefully avoided, whilst the Burkes, Pratt, and the more and more disliked Nell Sullivan, were her constant companions. She remarked too with surprise, the latter invariably formed one of a council from which she herself was as invariably excluded, although she was certain this distinction was awarded more owing to some inexplicable hold she had over its members than from any fascination the young lady in question might possess. Her manners to Kate became more arrogant and overbearing than ever; yet although Daly would redden and chafe at the insults offered his wife in his presence, it was evident he dared not interfere in her behalf.

They had been married some three weeks, when the Burkes, having succeeded in obtaining a job in the country, left for a fortnight or so; Pratt came more rarely; and Florry himself was often absent for a day or longer, without offering any explanation as to where he had been or with whom. It was now that our heroine experienced poverty in all its bitterness: dejected in spirits, weak with hunger, she would creep down the "Hollow" after dusk, with some little necessary article of clothing under her arm, and entering the pawnbroker's, beg for an increase on the few pence offered, "jist to git a morsel for herself an' a bit of supper for Florry." To say Daly did not feel all this were to

make him worse than he was; it was apparent something had fallen out contrary to his expectations, and he cursed his own imprudence for bringing this misery on one so young and helpless; but to his outward manner these self-reproaches only gave a severity which added fresh gall to the bitter cup she was destined to drain.

"Kattie, do come an' have a cup of tay," said Mary Sheehan, opening the door gently one afternoon when she knew Daly was out; "it'll cheer the life in you, girl; an' there's no one at home barrin' Pat, an' the Murphys, an' Biddy Sarchfield, that's asleep wid the rheumatis."

"Indeed an' it's meeself wanths it bad enough, Mary dear; for its nayther bit nor sup has passed me lips this blessed day," answered the girl, brushing away a tear with the back of her hand. "An' its very lonesome I am intirely, and me where Winny Pratt died too; but I'm afear'd Florry 'll be back prisintly; he promised to be in airly, an' praps he'd bring a bit wid him for the supper."

"I wisht the rope that he's airning had been tight-ened round his neck afore you'd had anything to say to him," exclaimed Mrs. Sheehan, indignantly. "I should like to see Pat Sheehan absinting himself day an' night widout givin' an account of his doins, an' taching me who I'd have in me own room, that's all! But if you won't *come*, I'll jist fetch the tay an' a bit of bread an' butther; an' don't cry, that's a darlin'," though by way of enforcing her advice, Mary began to weep for company.

- Somewhat restored by the tea, Kate dried her tears, and listened with some degree of interest to the news of

the "Buildings," which Mrs. Sheehan retailed for her entertainment.

"The Lord be marciful to us, they say the cholera's in the turn-coorte," and she crossed herself as she spoke. "I saw old Leary carried off to the 'House;' an' in two hours the bed was there agin to fetch Mary Danhaber, an' I did hear she died that nite; the work-house docther is always pacing to an' fro; Father Morgan was in the 'Buildins' three times yesterday; an' Pat says he saw Miss Bradshawe in the forenoon."

"I wish *I* could see Miss Bradshawe," said poor Kattie.

"Let me bring her whin Florry's out," answered Mary, eagerly.

But the very name of Florry banished the good intention which was half formed in her breast.

"No, I darn't," answered Kate, shaking her head mournfully; "he'd be the death of me widout marcy. Mary, I dreamt last night I was at home in Ireland, an' I saw Father Phelim; an' he frowned an' made me look into my mother's grave; an' it was open, an' nothin' in it but dhry bones, an' in the middle was me marriage lines; an' thin I thought they turned to Daly, an' he was at the bottom of the well, an' I lookin' into it. Now what do you think Moll Carty'd say to that dhrame?"

"Don't mind what the owld witch says. But tell me, Kate, does Florry ever talk of his first wife that died at home of the fever?"

"I niver heer'd him mintion her: once I quistioned him what was she like, and he snapped me up, and said he didn't know; so I asked him no more about it."

"Not know what his first wife was like?" said Mrs. Sheehan, with all the wounded dignity of a matron; "I spose that's the answer Pat Sheehan 'll think proper to make whin he's buried me; an' it's coortin' he'll be over me coffin no doubt; but I'll tache him——." How far Mary's anger at her husband's supposed delinquencies after her death might have carried her it is impossible to conjecture; their expression was, however, checked by the sound of a heavy foot, which caused her to start, and changed the current of her thoughts as she exclaimed, "It's Florry, sure enough! I'll make meeself scarce, Kattie; for I'd be sorry it's anger you'd be gettin' through me. Well, praps there are worse than my Pat in the world afther all;" and Mrs. Sheehan hurried away, though not so swiftly but that Daly as he entered caught a glimpse of her retreating figure.

"Who's that, Kattie, I'd like to know?" he inquired, almost fiercely, throwing his hat on the floor and himself into a chair. "Isn't it a strange thing that I niver return home but I find you gossippin' an' cosherin' wid the likes o' thim, who are ownly thryin' to pick all they can out of you?"

"It was ownly Mary Sheehan, who brought me a cup of tay; I'd not have taken it, Florry, but I was very wake intirely."

"Ah, I forgot," he answered, though not without emotion. "Mary's a kind-hearted creature, though a thrifle curious, like the rest. Well, don't fret, my girl; here's a shillin', go and get me a pint of beer, and somethin' for yerself; I've a little job to do to-night, an' if ye'r wise, Kattie, ye may hould up yer head-wid the rest o' thim yet."

His wife took the money in silence, and quickly returned with the beer, a loaf, and a slice or two of rusty bacon. Daly watched her movements as she busied herself raking together the fire and preparing the frugal meal.

"Was Ned Pratt here to-day?" he inquired abruptly, and in a tone that made her start.

"What ud he do here, an' you out? Sure an' its meeself has little love for him; he's an Englishman, an', as I've heer'd, fears nayther God or divil."

"Ye'r right in that, Kattie," answered her husband; "I've small rale love for him ayther, and afther this turn I'll be shot of the whole affair. If I get the share that I expict," he continued in an under tone, "I'll go to America, an' take her wid me, an' see can't I reform."

"Yer tay's reddy, Florry," interrupted his wife. "Isn't it meltin' this evenin'? sure an' there's a storm brewin'."

Daly sprang to his feet, gazing intently at the lurid sky, then sat down to his humble fare as if he had received a confirmation of something he wished.

"Now, Kattie, I'll not be home till very late, so go to bed; an' promise me not to let any of the neybour's here."

"But won't you want the fire?"

"Why it's hot enough, sure," and he tried to laugh. "Here's another shillin'; kiss me, girl, and make yersilf happy; there's luck in store for us yet."

His tone was so affectionate, that his wife ventured to say, casting as she did a wistful glance at the thunder-clouds which were rapidly gathering in the horizon,—

" Couldn't you go to-morrow ? it'll be a dreadful nite, I'm fearin'."

" To-night, or never."

And, as if anxious to avoid further questioning, he hurried away, leaving Kate with a load on her heart for which she was at a loss to account. It was not his absence—to that she was accustomed ; it was not even his ambiguous hints—lately he had often spoken of some good fortune in store for them ; but it was his very kindness made her tremble ; and having no friend to whom she dared open her mind, she, by a sort of uncontrollable impulse, sank on her knees and began to pray fervently, first to her God Himself, then to his blessed Mother to intercede for her : " becaze," as she herself afterwards expressed it, " the sweet Virgin nivr offinded Him, an' I've done nothin' else ever sinse I came to this counthry." Her short petition ended, she rose from her humble attitude, not without comfort, and thinking it useless to undress, lest Florry " ud want any thin'," threw herself on her bed, and overpowered by heat, sorrow, and mental anguish, soon sank into a deep though uneasy slumber. How long it lasted she knew not, yet she fancied it must have been of some duration, when she was aroused by a flash of lightning so vivid it illumined the room ; this was succeeded by a terrific peal of thunder, making the crazy walls reverberate and totter, whilst the flooring shook beneath her. She sat up and looked fearfully around, when she for the first time discovered there were others who had been startled even more than herself. The flickering light of a candle burning low in the socket revealed the haggard and bloodless countenance of Florry Daly ; he was

standing erect on the hearth, with knit brow and folded arms, his eyes fixed on a bundle which Jack Burke and his brother were busily unrolling at his feet : it contained something very bright, with a tingling sound when moved ; but as they escaped from the grasp of Corney Burke, Kate wondered what on earth they wanted with so many tin mugs and platters. She was about to inquire, when the sight of the fourth of the party made her resolve to lie down and remain quite still until he was gone. Seated at his ease, with perfect unconcern, was Ned Pratt, his always repulsive countenance rendered still more so by the half smile it wore as he prepared to reply to some previous observation of Daly's.

"It's rather late to play the saint now," he exclaimed with a sneer ; "these things must be stowed somewhere ; if the peelers hadn't been on our track, they could have been taken to the Jew's at once ; but I'm too well known to run the risk, so they must remain here for a day or two ; you can keep out of the way."

"By St. Patrick an' all the saints whom I've deserted, not a fraction of 'em shall bide here ! I'd not have a hair of her head hurted for the whole booty, an' ten times more ; I wish, Ned Pratt, I'd nivir seen you ; but I'll shake you off now, that's detarmined."

The person addressed whistled carelessly, beating time with his foot, and apparently deriving great amusement from the impatience of Daly, before he condescended to reply.

"You'll shake yourself off, Florry, like a fool as you are, and have the detective police after us before we've done squabbling. How can your baby wife come to

harm, when there isn't proof? And even if it were found in the well, with all of us absent, who's to know how it came there in such a house as this?"

"I've said my say, an' I'll bide by it," answered Florry, sullenly. "Divide the spoil hophazard, an' take yersilf off; yer the ownly one known, and that broken finger 'ul be a proof aginst you. But for *her*, Ned Pratt, I'd blow yer brains out before I'd see her trimbling in a poleesh-coorte."

And suiting the action to the word, he drew a pistol out of his coat-pocket, presenting it at the head of the Englishman.

"None of your mad freaks," said the latter, with seeming coolness, though inwardly much astonished; "I didn't take all this trouble for nothing, you may be sure. Here, Jack, catch hold of these light articles, and stow them where you talked of, they arn't good for very much; I must cut off with the rest. Will you meet me near Gray's Inn Lane in an hour, Daly? if you don't find me, look after yourselves;—why, what's the man mouthing about now?"

"I was jist thinking, Misther Pratt, suppose you cut off, as you call it, wid the whole, and lave us to be hung in yer stead, that's all," he answered with emphasis.

"They can't hang us, Florry, remember that; did I not offer to leave it all with you? Let us go together then."

"I was wrong not to trust you, Ned," said Daly, with a sudden revulsion of feeling; "but somehow the bizness doesn't sit light on my stomach, an' then I think of Kattie."

"Poor Kattie!" answered his companion thoughtfully, "she always reminds me of—of Winny's child, and I heard the boys say so too. But I must not stand prating here; be with me as soon as you can;" and gathering up the plate—for such it really was—he hurried away.

The Burkes were already gone, and Daly, after closing the door behind him, turned round, when to his infinite horror he perceived Kate standing in the midst of the room; her face was pale as that of a corpse, her eyes positively glaring in the intensity of her fear; she strove to speak, but her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth, and it was not before repeated efforts that she succeeded in gasping out the single word, "Florry!" For a moment he too stood motionless; then grasping her by the arm, dragged her towards the table on which still lay the loaded pistol, and pointing towards it emphatically with his disengaged hand, exclaimed in a voice husky with passion—

"Answer me, Kate, how much or how little is it you've heer'd of what we were talkin' about; and if you desave me, by the powers I'll be the death of you!"

"I'll tell you the truth, Florry," she replied, with the courage so often produced by excess of terror. "I s'pose I heer'd a dale more than you'd like, though I can't say I understood it intirely. Now be said by me, an' don't you go afther that Pratt, for it's to no good he'll lead you; an' if ill ud come to you, Florry, what ud I do, darlin'?"

"No harm 'll come, my own Kattie, if you keep quiet, and don't tell mortal man I've been home to-night; if any should ask afther me, you don't know

where I'm to be found, an' that'll be thrue for you too ; so God bless you, an' I'll be back whin I can settle wid Ned ; an' mind, I'll bring you a beautiful new gownd, and you'll have plinty to ate and dhrink too."

So saying, he once more concealed the pistol, and embracing his wife, prepared to leave the house ; but she twined her arms round him, and besought him so piteously to stay, that for a moment he was inclined to take her advice ; then, ashamed of his fluctuation of purpose, he angrily broke from her, and departed as noiselessly as possible.

The poor girl fastened the door, and when fairly alone gave full vent to her grief ; seating herself on the side of the bed, she sobbed like a child, rocking her body to and fro and talking to herself in Irish. The daylight streaming through the uncurtained casement reminded her the "neybours ud be wonderin' ;" so she washed her face, drew the bolt, and, to divert her anguish of mind, set about cleaning the room, singing as she did so to show how happy she was. A hundred times during her work would she pause to listen for Florry ; not a foot passed the door but she was sure it was his ; not a voice met her ear but she was up "to see was it him callin' ;" and as these were momentary occurrences, no marvel that evening found the scouring not half done, and Kate exhausted and faint. She had a few halfpence left, "so she stepped into one of the hucksters to get a candle, a grain of tay, an' a bit of butther, in case he'd come back." Yet that night passed, and the close of the succeeding day found her still alone and penniless. What was to be done ? she thought not of herself ; but there were no coals to warm *him*, no candle to cheer

him, when he did come, "an' av coorse, he'd be in in a minute." She dared not ask Mary for the loan of a sixpence, lest she should question her concerning her husband ; so she looked anxiously about the room to see if there was anything on which she might procure the required sum. Almost every article was gone,—the plaid shawl, her best gown, everything but her ring ; with that she would not part, come what might ; and she was about to abandon the search in despair, when a bundle of something in the corner attracted her attention. Hastily taking it up, she discovered it to be a tolerably good jacket, such as is worn by grooms, and with it were a large pair of scissors, or rather shears, generally used in stables. Not remembering to have seen them before, she wondered how they came there ; until recollecting her turn-out of the preceding day, she concluded they belonged to Daly, and had been dislodged from some hiding-place without her noticing it. She hesitated a few seconds, but strong necessity overcame even her fears of his displeasure ; so rolling them up together, she proceeded rapidly down the "Hollow," lest her husband might return during her absence. She was well known to the pawnbroker, yet he turned the jacket about, and examined the shears with minute attention, inquiring more than once how she came by them. She told him they were her husband's, that she found them in the corner ; and departed much pleased at so easily obtaining the sum she required.

That night, alas ! was doomed to be another of maddening suspense to poor Kate ; the bright beams of a July sun found her still seated by the black and untidy grate, dirty, woebegone, without heart to stir, and

in a state of mind evidently bordering on insanity. The clock of a neighbouring church struck twelve; she counted the strokes, though without knowing why she did so, but in so pre-occupied a mood, that had any one asked her the hour, it would have been impossible for her to satisfy them. Sounds of many voices and heavy steps were now heard ascending the stairs; she listened in the same dreamy way without evincing any surprise, although it was an hour at which the house was generally deserted. The room door noiselessly opened, then indeed she sprang to her feet, turning joyfully round to welcome her long-absent husband. She was, however, doomed to fresh disappointment; there were three or four men present, but the only familiar face amongst them was that of the pawnbroker. Two of the number wore the uniform of policemen, the other, though in plain clothes, was evidently one of the detective officers; and although not conscious of the object of their visit, their appearance made her heart beat thick.

"This is the person from whom you received the articles in question, sir?" inquired one of the force, pointing in the direction of our heroine.

"It is; and I do not think she will deny the fact," answered the man in a tone of great commiseration, for her gentle manners and civility had gained his goodwill. "Did you not, my girl, pawn a jacket and shears at our shop last evening?"

"Indeed an' I did, sir; sorry I was to do it, but I was obliged, for the fire was out, an'—"

"Let me caution you to say nothing to criminate yourself," interrupted the officer; "the goods are stolen,

and we must take you in charge; Evans, search the room."

His comrade obeyed; the drawers and boxes were opened, the bedding shook, every hole ransacked, whilst Kate, paralyzed by astonishment and fear, imploringly exclaimed,—

"Oh, thin, don't take me to prison, sir; I never stole a thing in my life, barrin' the nuts when I was a child, an' thin mother bate me to make me remimber. Ownly wait till me husband kums home, and he'll tell you it was for himself, an' not stalin' at all I was; I wouldn't wrong Florry for the whole world."

"We do not accuse you of robbing your husband, child," said the pawnbroker, kindly, "and I really believe *you* to be innocent. The truth is, the house of Dr. Sumners, at Norwood, was broken into on Monday night, and the articles you pawned are identified as part of the property."

"Inded, an' I niver broke into a house," sobbed poor Kate, in an accent of unfeigned surprise; "so ye'r undher a mistake altogither."

"Yet your husband may have done so, girl; and you are accused of receiving goods, knowing them to be stolen. But do not frighten yourself in this manner; if you are not guilty, you will be discharged."

This speech of the humane officer's, though meant for consolation, sent the blood from her cheek, as she remembered the conversation which she had overheard on the night of the thunder-storm; she, however, made no answer, but putting on her bonnet, walked quietly down the "Hollow" by the side of one of the policemen, the remainder of the party following at a

short distance. To add to her mortification (had it been possible to do so), she was recognised on her road to the court-house by many of her associates, whilst her red swollen eyes and pallid cheeks did not fail to excite the sympathy of some and the derision of others. Yet their observations fell on deaf ears; her heart was with him whose guilt had placed her in her present ignominious situation, and the "Here we are at last" of her companion, as they reached the open door of the prisoners' entrance, was probably the most welcome sound she had heard that day. The van in which these latter had been brought to the office still stood at the mouth of the vaulted passage leading to the police-court, and, as was usual, the numerous hives by which the main alley is intersected poured forth their idlers, eager to see them brought in, or rather out, as the examinations had been on since half-past ten o'clock. Amongst these loiterers were a few from the "Buildings," whose surprise at seeing Kattie in custody was loudly expressed, according to the dispositions of those who gave it utterance.

"Sure an' it's Missis Daly; who'd have thought it! What's she been at, I wonther?"

"Ah, pride 'll always come to shame. See that now, her husband's like to be transported, I've heer'd."

"Poor thing!" said a third, "she was too good for the likes of him; she's ownly a Gracian too."

Their voices died into an indistinct murmur, and, passing on, her cheeks tingling with shame, she found herself in a long stone passage, or hall, lined on either side by benches filled with prisoners, witnesses waiting to be called, and anxious friends. Policemen were

hurrying to and fro in every direction, bearing the truncheon-like rolls containing the charges; whilst others were gathered in knots, discussing the likelihood of getting up a case for the Sessions, and the consequent chance of their own preferment.

"Stay here one moment," said the officer; "I don't think we're called into court yet."

"Yes, Evans," exclaimed the sergeant of the division, "the case is now on; bring forward the prisoner."

"This way, then," said the policeman addressed; and taking her by the arm, he led her the length of the hall up two or three steps into a sort of ante-room, from which a door communicated with the court itself. Here everything wore a more official appearance; the inspectors were collected round a desk, at which presided the officer whose duty it was to settle fines, examine the fitness of bails, and transact other matters of business peculiar to a police-court. At the entrance of this apartment Kate was consigned to the guardianship of the turnkey, one who under a rough exterior concealed a feeling heart, and who gazed with astonishment at her childlike appearance. "Why, she isn't much like the rest on 'em, I think, Mr. Sweetly; there must be a mistake;" and throwing open the door, he escorted the trembling Kate into the court itself. This was a room rather confined and ill-ventilated; the bench being raised a step, and carpeted, beneath it sat a copying-clerk, and on either side were oak forms, which printed notices appropriated to the use of reporters and counsel, though in the present case they were occupied by the friends of Dr. Sumners, as were also the vacant chairs on the bench. The space allotted for the public behind

the dock was literally crowded by the lower orders; in fact, it was evident that the examination was one which excited great interest. But it was on an elderly gentleman with powdered hair and a glittering watch-chain that the girl's eyes were riveted. He was the sitting magistrate; she felt it, and something told her she was glad of it: for he was blessed with a humane expression of countenance, which his actions did not belie; and though inflexibly just, he was one who grudged neither time nor labour in sifting a case, never consulting his own ease or convenience when the interests of the public required its sacrifice. True, his underlings sometimes grumbled, and designated the worthy magistrate as *prosy*. So did not the half-famished wife, who, with a squalid infant in her arms and a cut across her brow, sued for protection against him who had vowed at the altar to be her solace and comforter; so did not those whose differences, after disturbing a neighbourhood perhaps for years, were reconciled more effectually by the good man's jesting exhortations, than by the strong arm of the law. Yet the habitual drunkard and profligate feared his frown, for he could be severe as well as merciful; and it was evident the case before him had awakened the former more than the latter attribute.

Next to the magistrate was seated a gentleman whose appearance betokened him as belonging to the very highest grade of society: he started on the entrance of the girl, and fixed his dark penetrating eye on her with an expression of pity and almost painful interest, although she herself was too pre-occupied by her degradation to notice him then; had she done so, she would

have recognised him as one who not very long ago had well-nigh fallen a victim to her vanity and his own imprudence. She was placed in the dock side by side with the others; her pale, though innocent, face contrasting powerfully with the variety of evil passions impressed on the visages of her fellow-prisoners. At the farther end stood the two Burkes; Jack sullen and dogged, his brother wretched enough, with down-cast head and bloodshot eyes, from which he vainly strove to chase the tear which he seemed to think shamed his manhood, or more correctly boyhood,—for Corney Burke was not yet eighteen, and had been led into this scrape by his elders. Next to him was Nell Sullivan, lacking none of her usual effrontery; dirty, slovenly, no blush on her cheek, with a countenance which spoke as plainly as possible that she was resolved to brazen it out. Then came one hardened in guilt, a character well known to the officers, more especially in the neighbourhood of Fox Court, a locality remarkable for the nefarious propensities of its inhabitants; he had repeatedly been placed at the tribunal of justice for minor offences, but this, if proved home to him, was transportation, and he knew it, yet he was unmoved; he had cast glances of scornful defiance at his accusers, of contemptuous pity at his companions, until his eye met those of Kate, when a pang of remorse flitted athwart his countenance, and Pratt, bold, reckless as he was, cowered beneath the withering glance of Florry Daly, who then buried his head in his hands and groaned aloud. Placed by his side, the poor girl, almost forgetful of her dangerous situation, uttered a cry of gladness, stretched out her arms, tottered, and

must have fallen but for his support; she clung around him, wept, laughed hysterically, and was evidently so unable to stand, that a chair was brought for her accommodation.

We will not enter into the details of the case; suffice it to say, the Burkes had contrived by means of a forged character to obtain temporary employment in the stables of Dr. Sumners, and through their means, on the night in question, Pratt and Daly having obtained admission, an extensive robbery had been committed, though not so noiselessly but that the servants had been aroused, Pratt, who was the last to quit the house, having his finger broken in the scuffle which ensued. Through the vigilance of the detective police the whole had been captured, the plate recovered before it was melted down; and from the conclusive nature of the evidence they would have been sent to the Sessions on the first hearing but for the unavoidable absence of Dr. Sumners, owing to the rapid increase of the cholera, and his consequent professional duties.

"Catherine Daly," said the magistrate, "wife of the prisoner Florry Daly, charged with receiving goods, knowing them to be stolen: call the witness."

"Indeed, yer riverince! sir! I ask yer wurship's pardon, but I niver knew sich a thing an'—"

"Silence, my girl; you will be heard in your turn: call the witness."

The pawnbroker was placed in the box. He identified Kate as the person who had pledged the articles in question, adding he had known her some time; she had always appeared a quiet, well-disposed person, and he really believed she was speaking truth when she

asserted she had found them in cleaning out the room, and supposed them to be her husband's.

"Now, prisoner," demanded the magistrate, "what have you to say to all this? How came you by these articles?"

"Sure an' yer wurship its meeself do'sn't know; I found thim in a hape, an' there was no fire for Florry, and nothin' to ate, so I parted wid thim; an' can't he do what he likes wid his own?"

"They were not his own; but answer me: were you not aware they were part of property stolen from Dr. Sumners' house, and did not you receive them knowing this?"

"Indeed, an' I didn't; ask Florry, he'll tell you so; an' he, poor fellow! if they *are* stolen, it isn't his fault for sartain, but that Ned Pratt's, who was always kummin' an' takin' him away from me, an' I feared it was afther no good they were."

"Well, my poor girl," said the magistrate, kindly, "I really believe *you* are not guilty. For Ned Pratt, Florry Daly, Jack and Corney Burke, the proofs against them are so clear, I must fully commit them to take their trial at the Old Bailey for burglary; also Ellen Sullivan as an accomplice before the act, and for receiving no inconsiderable share of the booty, knowing it to be stolen; but for yourself, if you had any one to speak to your character, I should discharge you."

"An' yer worship, if my word ud be taken, she's as innocent as an angel; Pratt'll say so too. She knew nothin' of the bizness before or afther; and how should she?" passionately exclaimed Daly. "She's little better than a child, yer worship, an' don't, God bless

you, send her to jail, to be hardened by what she's not used to ; isn't it bad enough that she iver came across the like o' me ? I've ruined meeself, or that divil Pratt did it for me ; but don't let me have the ruin of *her* on my sowl."

"Your testimony," answered the magistrate, much moved, "would avail her little. You seem to love your wife ; why did you not think of her before you leagued with one who is well known as an old offender."

"I did think of her," said Florry ; "I thought of nothin' else. It was all the dhrink ; I couldn't keep the work, and I couldn't see her pinin' wid want ; when she fretted I grew mad, an' God forgive me ! I gave her the stern look and the hard word, but it was all on account of the love I had for her ; though I s'pose when I'm transported, it's not long she'll mind it."

"With your case," continued the magistrate, "I cannot deal summarily ; but for Catherine Daly," and he turned towards the officers : "is there no one who knows her ?"

"If my guarantee would be of any avail," said the gentleman before mentioned, rising from his seat, "I have some slight knowledge of the prisoner, and believe her utterly incapable of the offence she is charged with."

"You surely jest, Lord Norville," said Dr. Sumners with a smile, in which curiosity and incredulity were strangely mingled, "or probably are mistaken in the party ; this girl lives in —— Buildings."

"I know it, doctor, and have lately seen her under

circumstances which convinced me she was as innocent as I knew those around her to be guilty."

The extraordinary beauty of the girl, and the unwonted eagerness of the usually stoically indifferent nobleman, awakened a strange suspicion in the bosom of Dr. Sumners, who, it may be remembered, had been mentioned by Mrs. Selby as the medical attendant of the Earl of Lindore; it was, however, chased or diverted into a fresh channel as Daly replied eagerly—

"Heaven bless you for that, my lord! I have much to ask your pardon for, an' I do so heartily; an' if you'd jist spake a word to Miss Bradshawe to look afther her, you'd have my prayers, though they're not worth much, to be sure." At the mention of Josephine the colour deserted the earl's cheek, and, although conscious he was undergoing the scrutinizing gaze of Dr. Sumners, he could not muster self-possession sufficient for a reply.

"Under all circumstances, then," said the magistrate, bowing towards Lord Norville, "I consider myself justified in discharging Catherine Daly; though, were she not the wife of one of the prisoners, Dr. Sumners," and he turned to the prosecutor, "her evidence might be of value."

"Indeed an' she's no more his wife than I am, exclaimed Nell Sullivan, who was probably the only person present on whom this scene had failed in producing an impression. "Florry Daly left a livin' wife and three childre at Roscrea, and his Pradestant weddin' was all a sham; let him deny it if he dare." The face of the speaker bore the aspect of fiendish exultation, though it was well for her Pratt was placed betwixt

them, or not even the presence in which he stood would have been a protection against the effects of Florry's rage.

"Liar! false, false liar!" he thundered; "you yersilf saw us married; don't listen to her, Kate, me darlin'! it's all envy, nothin' else; you *are* my wife, an' I'll own ne'er anither!"

"Not till I'm dead, Masther Florry, vagabon' as you are; an' now you've got your desarts; here am I to the fore, yer lawful wife wid me lines in me pocket, an' yer childre, you disobaydient parint, all kum to look afther you; an' an't you shamed to look me in the face now?" So saying, the speaker, fighting her way through the crowd, stood before the bench, a stout red-faced woman, with a child on her back, another in her arms, and a third at her heels, the whole group being barefooted and the worse for travel. "I'm an injured woman, plaze yer lordship," she continued; "I feared this jintleman was up to his thricks, so I folleyed him, an' here he is married, an' jist goin' to be hanged; I was tould by a neybour that kummed from me own place where I'd find him, so she showed me the way; an' now he must lave this trumpery, an' kum back wid his famerly."

"What have you to say to this fresh and serious charge, prisoner?" inquired the magistrate, with a compassionate glance at Kattie, who seemed frozen into stone; "if it be true, the penalty is a severe one."

"Thru!" exclaimed the new-comer, "let him look me in the face an' deny it. A'nt his fine childre, as like him as two paws? an' what ud he see in that pale-faced

ehit, I'd be glad to know? Wife indeed! I'll pay her off, that I will, the jade!"

"Why do you not answer?" said Lord Norville, anxiously; "the poor girl will be killed by this suspense; surely you cannot be such a villain?"

"I am a villain," answered Daly in a tone of concentrated anguish, and with a look of fury at his new-found wife. "This woman's uncle an' I fell out; I hated the whole pack iv 'em, an' I swore I'd be revinged; but I loved Kattie too, an' I thought I'd git the money and take her to America, an' thin be out of the way of that skirlling cat, an' she'd niver be the wiser; but it's all up wid me now. Kate, you must forget me, an' thry an' be happy widout me. As for you, ma'am, I'll tell you a sacrate; it's glad to be thransported I am, jist to keep out of the rache o' yer claws."

During this scene no sound had been uttered by Kate, though her eyes had wandered from one speaker to another, as if she could read their inmost thoughts. But on Florry's words her very existence seemed to hang; she grew paler and paler, and busied herself in striving to get the fatal ring from her finger; her hand was, however, so swollen that it for a time defied all her efforts; at last she succeeded; the colour rushed to her cheek, whilst an unnatural lustre blazed from her eye—"Florry," she exclaimed, "there was a curse on our weddin'; I knew it, I felt it *here*," and she pressed her hand on her heart, as though to quiet its tumultuous beatings. "Where 'll I go now? Who'll luk at me? I'll be pointed at, an' all through you; but I forgive you, an' lave you to God."

She threw the ring violently towards him, reeled forward, then fell on the floor, bathed in the blood which gushed from her mouth and nose ; a bustle ensued ; a stretcher being procured, the unfortunate girl was placed tenderly upon it, and conveyed to the infirmary. The prisoners were ordered to be removed, when Pratt, opening his lips for the first time, muttered, " Daly, you are the most cold-blooded scoundrel I ever encountered, and, please God I get the chance, I'll settle with you for this ; so look to yourself, my fine fellow."

Mrs. Daly also retired with her " frinds," all talking and condoling together ; order being at length restored, the business of the day was proceeded with, and Kate Gearey soon forgotten, as new subjects of commiseration presented themselves.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TEMPTATION.

Not only to the family of Lord Lindore, but to Mrs. Selby herself, had Josephine preserved a total silence on the subject of her meeting with the Earl of Norville, thereby sparing herself the multiplicity of questionings and surmises in which that good lady was prone to indulge whenever an event occurred that she did not quite understand, or about which she considered that she ought to have been consulted. For more than a week Miss Bradshawe had to listen to ambiguous speeches " on the impropriety of a young lady's not

returning home at seasonable hours—of being seen alone in the streets at night, and the folly of affecting singularity ; this was generally succeeded by a rigid cross-examination as to the manner of Winny Pratt's death, the probable spread of the cholera, &c. &c. However, in process of time even this subsided, and Mrs. Selby's attention was divided between the perplexities of the "laburnum pattern," and the still greater difficulty of removing a stack of hostile chimneys, the smoke of which *would*, every windy day, take possession of her back windows, committing violent assaults on her snowy dimity, and which for years past she had purposed indicting as a nuisance the first convenient opportunity. Nor was this all ; the chapel, of the congregation of which she had formed one for the last seventeen years, having for about the tenth time during that period been purchased by a fresh dissenting sect, she was too busy accustoming herself to the peculiar tenets of the self-styled "*Saints*," to have leisure to bestow even a passing thought on her niece, whose spiritual blindness (however it might be deplored) she had long since abandoned all hopes of removing. Yet, to do the old lady justice, she had singularly liberal ideas regarding religion ; she rarely passed cathedral, church, or meeting-house without entering, considering herself equally on the high road to heaven, whether assisting at the Puseyite form of worship, or seated the admiring spectator at a Jew's synagogue. Neither had she any objection to Catholics ; she considered them "a very good sort of people," and had no doubt, if they would do away with confession and fasting, "they would benefit their cause and augment their numbers."

When in the country, she often went to their churches, but in London it could not be done, as the "Saints" would be offended; and she had lately been nominated an elder, and voted in by one of the congregation as "worthy to take the sacrament." Since that time she had been favoured by visions and voices, which manifested themselves in so extraordinary a manner, that the uninitiated might have considered her slightly deranged, her ecstatic dissertations on their meaning forming probably one of the severest trials of Josephine's patience. Yet with all this, Mrs. Selby was excessively fond of her charge, and, as the only child of a nephew she had idolized, was peculiarly sensitive to any slight she received from "the proud race," who she pertinaciously persisted was honoured, not degraded, by an alliance with a Bradshawe. That there was something the matter with the "girl," she was certain, and equally so, that of this something Lord Lindore (whom she could never bring herself to regard with thorough cordiality) was the cause. So she guessed and fidgetted, made up her mind a hundred times, and was yet as far from the mark as ever. It was, however, certain that Miss Bradshawe's visits to Grosvenor Square became less frequent than before; though, whatever her motives, they were closely ensconced in a corner of her own heart, or rather conscience, for a sharp strife between duty and inclination was rendering her pale cheek paler than ever, and visibly undermining a naturally delicate constitution. To analyze her feelings would have been, even to herself, a difficult undertaking; for, sooth to say, although she had been schooling them for six long years, they even now eagerly watched their opportunity

to rebel against the mental discipline she sought to establish. Josephine was far from exempt from the weakness of humanity ; though enthusiastically attached to her religion, and humbly grateful to her God for the grace which had led her to a knowledge of the truth, she could not, strive as she would, forget how very dearly she had once loved Edgar Wellborne, now earl of Norville. On being exiled from her uncle's house, she had cast no lingering look of regret on her forfeited position, estranged friends, or the loss of what the world styles pleasure. The weight of the blow was diminished by its very severity, and Miss Bradshawe resigned herself to the change of circumstances with an equanimity which wounded the self-love of the earl, gratified Mrs. Selby, and rather puzzled every one else. But all the consolation her new religion could afford was required to wean her from the remembrance of him whom she had resigned at the very moment she had prized him most ; and however strictly she adhered to the line of duty she had drawn for herself, there were moments when the constancy of her nature and intensity of her feelings raised a storm in which her frail resolution must have been infallibly wrecked but for Her on whom she rested with the trusting affection of a little child ; Her who, though exempt from human failings, had drained to its last drop the chalice of human woes ; Mary, the humble, the immaculate, the pure ! Mary, the extirpator of heresies, and, under that title more especially, the convert's friend.

Still, for the first three years, Josephine's sufferings were intense. Lord Norville was abroad ; and well was it for her she was thus spared the temptations

his presence would have awakened. Hers was not the disposition to repair broken ties by forming fresh ones, and it was but slowly she could be taught to sanctify and purify those predominant passions, only dangerous when ill-directed. She had hoped, in her first fervour, to be able to strip off human frailties as she would divest herself of some garment when weary of its fashion, and the severe mortifications she endured from her repeated failures were not always borne in a proper spirit of humility. For a considerable time she would shrink within herself at the bare mention of a name once so dear ; though by repeated schoolings she at length conquered so far, as to receive with at least outward equanimity the intelligence of his engagement with Lady Angela Malvern. On this family secret being imparted with due ceremony by the countess, Miss Bradshawe, who felt her uncle's eye was on her, comported herself with such perfect indifference as to baffle even his penetration, and make him marvel more and more by what witchery the wayward and impetuous girl had learnt to subdue her feelings, without crushing at once a heart the innate pride of which he so well knew. The worst part of Josephine's task was, however, accomplished. Lord Norville's love was now the *right* of another ; and as she gazed in the radiant face of the young Angela, she felt that as far as *he* was concerned, she had nothing more to hope or fear. A rapid change for the better took place in her character ; less morbidly sensitive in her feelings, less alive to the want of refinement in her associates, duties became pleasures ; she could now smile with real cheerfulness, and learnt to interest herself in what she would before have con-

temptuously regarded as a trifle, carrying her self-denial to such perfection as to pass occasionally through the ordeal of Lady Lindore's parties without considering herself more than half a martyr. Of course, she must some time or other meet the bridegroom elect,—but how? where? Often did she detect herself making the inquiry of her heart, and still more frequently wondering whether her pretty spoiled cousin were really worthy of one possessing those high intellectual acquirements and that unbending firmness of character which had engaged and retained her own early affections. 'Tis true, the thoughtless little beauty had during her first season bestowed no inconsiderable portion of her smiles on the youthful scion of nobility, alluded to by her father in a preceding chapter as Charles Howard. 'Tis true she had spoiled her beautiful face by pouting, and her bright eyes were suffused by something very like a tear, when informed by her mother of the intended alliance, already settled to the satisfaction of the female head of either family. Her reluctance had, however, little weight with Lady Lindore; Angela was her only daughter; earls were not to be met with every day; as to humouring the romantic folly of a girl of eighteen, it was not to be thought of; so she was talked to, lectured, and bribed, until, her head full of carriages, point-lace, diamonds, and opera-boxes, she informed Josephine very gravely, she thought it must have been a mistake of her own, and that she really was in love with Lord Norville after all. How much the temporary absence of his rival had to do with this discovery, may be hereafter seen.

It was not, however, to be concealed that they were an ill-assorted pair, and matters neither proceeded so rapidly or prosperously as the countess had anticipated. The gay and heedless Angela had from her very childhood been the darling of one parent, the pride of the other. Courted, followed wherever she went, exacting and receiving the most deferential homage from her numerous admirers, no wonder that the calm, unimpassioned manners of a suitor, who had secured the consent of her parents before her own and did not at all times seem *quite* blind to her imperfections, struck a chill to her heart, making her by no means anxious to quit a home where she decidedly formed the first thought and principal object of attention to all. On the other hand, Lord Norville was not always pleased with a light-heartedness which to one of his temperament savoured of frivolity; so that a want of confidence gradually sprang up between them, which promised but ill for their future felicity. This was their relative position when his unexpected encounter with Miss Bradshawe had rekindled a passion in his bosom never totally extinguished, and caused him to ponder seriously on what he now termed his own obstinate prejudice, which had separated him from her he loved, and almost united him for life to one whom he felt he could never have rendered happy. After some days of bitter inquietude, his mind was made up: one more interview with Josephine; he would then explain himself to Lord Lindore, who had been all along a quiescent rather than a consenting party. The difficulty was, how to obtain this interview; he positively haunted Grosvenor Square, without catching even a passing glance of her whom he

sought ; and he was about to abandon the plan he had formed, and speak to the earl at once, when an unexpected accident favoured his wishes.

It was on a bright sultry morning in July, that Lady Angela, attired in the most becoming manner for a horticultural fête, from which she expected to derive great amusement, escaped from the hands of her maid, and entering the drawing-room tried to wile away the time until her mother should be ready. The carriage was at the door ; but the countess, who inherited no trifling portion of Italian indolence, never hurried herself, and her more mercurial daughter knew she had a full half-hour to wait. She took up the nearest volume, but she was in no humour for study, so she threw it from her, and struck a few chords on her harp ; alas ! the instrument was out of tune. She viewed herself over and over again in a lofty mirror, anxious for an excuse to summon Pauline to her assistance ; but no, her costume was faultless ; and as a last resource, she seated herself on an ottoman, striving to arouse her favourite little spaniel from his siesta by pulling his long ears, and pressing him rather roughly with her foot ; but May, after one or two uneasy movements in his dreams, slightly snarled, and curling himself round still more comfortably, slept on. Almost out of patience, Angela was about to re-ascend the stairs, when a servant announced Mr. Charles Howard, causing her to start, blush, look exceedingly foolish, and feel uncertain if she ought to quit the apartment or remain.

“ Your pardon, Lady Angela. I had hoped—that is, I thought—to have seen Lady Lindore.”

"Mamma will be here directly, pray sit down." And she re-seated herself, merely because she felt incapable of standing. Young Howard did not, however, follow her example; biting his lip, he exclaimed, somewhat bitterly—

"There was a time when I flattered myself my presence would not have so disconcerted the Lady Angela Malvern. It was but last week I returned from Rome, and not until yesterday I learnt I might with *certainly* congratulate her on her approaching marriage with the earl of Norville." During this address the colour had deserted her cheeks, the rich tassels of her girdle suffering considerably from the efforts of fingers not often so industriously employed; she, however, tried to smile, and stammering out something about being very glad or very sorry—she was not certain which—gazed wistfully at the door, wondering if the countess ever meant to appear. Charles Howard was very handsome, very much smitten with Lady Angela, but neither very old nor very wise, or he would not have been guilty of the unpardonable folly of falling in love with the only daughter of an earl, more especially as, though of ancient and honourable descent, he had a father still living, and three elder brothers, two of them not only married, but blessed with progenies, such as precluded all fear either of the extinction of the time-honoured name, or of the family estates devolving upon a younger branch. Now the intended union of the "fair ladie" of his love with Lord Norville, though considered by others the most natural thing in the world, was in his estimation an act little short of high treason. She had danced with him, smiled on him,

may he was almost sure half sighed when he bade her adieu last year ; and for his part, he had thought of her, dreamed of her, and once, when rehearsing for the private theatricals which constituted one of the winter amusements of the British embassy at Florence, had addressed his Juliet of the hour by the more musical name of Angela, thereby eliciting peals of mirth from the spectators, when he expected showers of tears, smelling-bottles, and pocket-handkerchiefs. Under all these circumstances, he considered himself perfectly justified in upbraiding her with perfidy, and making himself miserable for a time. Hoping for an opportunity of executing this romantic resolution, he had proceeded to Grosvenor Square, much to his astonishment finding himself, without quite knowing how, alone with Angela. Her visible and unlooked-for agitation gave him courage ; though not very well knowing in what way to begin, he darted forward, and bending his knee, prepared to address her in the most approved theatrical style. This was too much for the courage of a naturally timid girl ; hastily rising, before the enamoured swain had time to commence his appeal, she hurried towards the door, at the threshold of which she encountered the innocent cause of this demonstration—no less a person than Lord Norville himself. Conscious of the ridiculous figure he was likely to cut, young Howard regained his feet and effected a very speedy exit ; whilst Angela, though crimsoned with blushes, had the good sense to return to the apartment, and after anxiously glancing at the face of the earl, waited until he should enter on the subject. To her great surprise, wonder was the predominant expression of his counte-

nance ; jealousy, anger,—there was none. Taking her hand, he calmly led her to a seat, and placing himself beside her, merely inquired if she would answer him simply and candidly. On her bowing assent, he continued,—“Then, Angela, do you really entertain a partiality for Mr. Howard ? that he does for you, I must infer from the attitude in which I found him ; and remember, not only your future peace, but mine, depends on your present sincerity.”

“I do not wish to render any one unhappy,” she replied ; “I would much rather you spoke to mamma ; she knows more about it than I do.” The *naïveté* of this remark made him smile ; he had, however, too much at stake to be so easily contented. He therefore replied kindly, though firmly, “It is better you should answer yourself. Have you made any promise to Mr. Howard ?”

“No, that I certainly did not ; we used to dance together last season, and talk ; and—perhaps he thought—but the news of our engagement surprised him, or he would never have acted so foolishly,” and a large tear trembling on her long lashes did not escape the notice of her companion.

“Nay, my dear girl, you cannot deceive *me*, though you may yourself. Were there no mamma in the way, the Lady Angela Malvern would rather be the wife of Charles Howard, with all the disadvantages attached to his position, than she would of the wealthy Lord Norville, whom she considers grave, though not old enough to be her father. Now, smile again, and trust to me ; I am a very safe confidant ; we will talk of this hereafter. Shall I find the earl in the library ?”

"I do not think he is at home," she answered, breathing more freely; "but if he is, will you tell him I expected Josephine; she must keep him company until we return." It was now her companion's turn to look confused, although the entrance of Lady Lindore prevented its being remarked by Angela. A slight bustle ensued; and after seeing the carriage drive fairly away, Lord Norville re-entered the house, desiring the servant, if Miss Bradshawe called, to show her into the library, and let him know, adding, as though in extenuation, he had a message to deliver from Lady Angela. The man, however,—never very remarkable for his punctuality,—allowed Josephine to remain a considerable time in the house before he remembered the latter portion of his injunctions; and when the earl entered, he found her so deeply engaged with a pamphlet which she had taken up from the table, as not to notice his presence until he was close to her side. When she did look up, there was a deep flush on her cheek, though it was evidently the offspring neither of pleasure or confusion, and her lip was slightly curved as she rather haughtily returned his mute salutation. One glance at the salmon-coloured cover of the book she held explained the mystery. Lord Norville inwardly groaned as he recognised the "Annual Report of the Ragged-school Union," of which Lord Lindore, as already hinted, was so staunch a supporter. Not knowing exactly what to say, he hesitated, when Miss Bradshawe broke a silence he alone felt to be awkward, by observing, "There appears some slight discrepancy between the rules of this association and the notices of the schools; the latter teem with calumnies of so gross

a nature, that I am only surprised they obtain credit from any individual one degree above the most illiterate. I thought the days were passed, when such phrases as 'machinery of the Popish system,' 'altar denunciations,' 'bigoted Papists,' 'worshippers of a God made of flour and water,' to say nothing of those 'underground vaults, reminding one of the cells of the Inquisition,' could make more impressions than 'Blue Beard,' 'Jack the Giant-killer,' or other similar productions, *formerly* considered the exclusive property of children of a smaller growth. Yet here I find them first gravely read before, then printed and circulated under the sanction of, a committee, who certainly must have offered their understandings as a sacrifice on the altar of their zeal." The turn the conversation appeared likely to assume would have discomfited a more able politician than Lord Norville. Josephine was, however, too full of her subject to notice his embarrassment, and continued with some warth, "Your sixth rule expressly enjoins, 'that those children be *alone* admitted who are *destitute of any other means of instruction*;' yet in their reports your zealous and well-paid missionaries complain that 'Catholic parents force their children into the Romish schools,' in some cases resorting to the unheard-of expedient of taking urchins (who, having arrived at the mature ages of six and seven, are of course competent judges of their own actions) by the shoulders, and, as is more than intimated, by a special understanding with the Roman See;" and throwing the book from her, she concluded by observing, "Do you really think my uncle gives credit to all this folly? or is he worked upon by others?"

"His opinions seem to make little impression on

you, Miss Bradshawe," said Lord Norville, internally wishing the pamphlet had never left the society's office. "Dare I say you yourself are to blame for the unfavourable eye with which Lord Lindore regards Romanists? Have you not proved a bigot in the strictest acceptation of the term?"

"Probably you would take the trouble to define the word 'bigot;' it is a pet phrase with Protestants, and generally applied to those who do not think proper to believe one thing and practise another."

"Shall I, then, substitute enthusiast? Is it *necessary*, when a young lady becomes a Catholic, in opposition to the wishes of her natural guardians, that she should be found near midnight in a court infested by the wild and lawless, who—"

"Wild, if you will, but not quite so lawless as you imagine; neither, as a rule, is it *necessary*. On the occasion you allude to, it was to comply with the request of a fellow-creature in her last extremity. Can the earl of Norville find an equally justifiable motive for his presence, where, I must say, he was neither welcome or of service?"

"Perhaps, Josephine," he replied, "you might have had something to do with an act which I candidly acknowledge to have been imprudent. Will you hear my explanation of the circumstance?"

"No," she answered, half-jestingly; "my own failings are more than sufficient, without burdening myself with yours. I am in no way accountable for the rash performances of others; and even if serious evil had accrued, I could not have blamed myself, however I might regret it."

"Yet do you know," he continued, musingly, "I

have often hoped the faults of these people must sooner or later disgust you with the religion for which you though it right to desert that of your baptism, and have expressed myself to that effect to your uncle."

"Then you were deceived," said Josephine, gravely. "There can be no more convincing proof of the divine origin of Catholicity, than the pertinacity with which the lower orders of Irish adhere even to the most minute precepts of a creed which they cherish as dearly as their own existence. The most ignorant have a faith clear and defined; a faith which they receive, not because it is written in books or taught by men, holy though they be, but because it is transmitted from age to age by the Holy Ghost Himself, through the medium of those invested with sacerdotal authority. This they know so well, that they would regard as a sacrilegious mummery an attempt to administer any of the Sacraments by even a dignitary of the Protestant Church, no matter how high his rank. I once knew a father steal a dying child scarce three hours old from one of the hospitals (under his coat), lest it should be baptized by a parson, knowing, if he could not succeed in finding a priest, a Catholic lay baptism was preferable to the random sprinkling by which the souls of these poor children are so cruelly risked."

"But why," inquired Lord Norville, insensibly interested in this discussion, "if such be their faith, do they not act up to it? why bring disgrace on both their country and religion by habits of, intoxication and natural idleness?"

"First premising that crime is not nearly so rife amongst them as amongst English Protestants of the

same class, I will endeavour to explain this seeming inconsistency. The Irish born in London, or, as your Report there styles them, 'the Cockney Irish,' have in many cases been deprived of their parents at a tender age, and having no natural protectors, have been consigned to the workhouse. Here, so far as their bodies are concerned, they are treated with kindness or cruelty, as the case may be—too often, I fear, the latter; but for their souls, it is a *fact*, that however strenuous an endeavour be made to inculcate 'good, sound Protestant principles,' it is always unsuccessful; they forget they are Catholics, or rather retain only the name, and issue from those soul-destroying walls a disgrace to the members of their own religion, a scandal to those of others. So they go on during life; at the hour of death a priest is generally sent for, though I regret to say they oftentimes die without, thus depriving themselves of the slender chance (it is but a slender one) of a death-bed repentance. Now whom, may I inquire, have we to thank for all this?—the Protestant legislators of the land; and it does seem a hard case that Catholics, who, despite the other imperative claims on their slenderly stocked purses, contribute their proportion also towards the support of workhouses and unions, have to feel that in the existing state of affairs, such of their little ones as once enter there are in all human probability destined to mourn the loss of their immortal souls; they invariably quit those places destitute of any fixed principle [of belief whatever. Have not the majority of those who daily throng our police-courts learnt their first lessons in vice from evil associates picked up in the parish workhouse? and for the females, is it not still

worse? In fact, I consider it next to a moral impossibility for a young girl, however well disposed, to escape the contamination of the example she there beholds."

"You surely would not do away with workhouses altogether?" inquired Lord Norville: "what would you substitute in their stead? No properly organised government can hold together without them."

"In a Protestant country they are, I grant, necessary evils, though, if you remember, your own Cobbett satisfactorily proves we once contrived to get on very well without them. Now suppose your philanthropic rulers, instead of raising the hue and cry they do (as if we were worshippers of Moloch, or a horde of wild Indians come to invade a peaceful territory), would assist us with a little of the money they are wasting on missionaries, Bible-readers, and 'Christian females,' for the attainment of that impossibility, our *sincere* conversion to Protestantism; *we* could endow our present orphanages and erect new ones, whilst *they* would confer a more radical benefit on society, and lessen more effectually the amount of crime, than by permitting the above-mentioned phalanx to prowl about, employing promises, bribes, and resorting to the most disgraceful subterfuges, in order to draw up a report for the next Exeter Hall meeting, scarce a word of which any one of you credit."

"Yet," said Lord Norville, inwardly much struck by these arguments, "do you mean to tell me all the inhabitants of those Buildings, of which I had lately so unfavourable a specimen, were reared in an English workhouse? If not, in what do those born in Ireland differ so materially?"

“Not only in the purity of their faith, but their superior morality; for there really are many in that very court whose simple piety and strength to resist temptations might be a source of edification to every one of us. I could point out some from whose conversation I have derived more benefit than from the most eloquent discourses of my days of Protestantism; and how often, when witnessing the resignation of the poor under physical sufferings, have I blushed to think, that with every comfort and means of amelioration, I chafed and fretted under some ailment too trifling to bear comparison with the tithe of what they endure? Neither you nor I, Lord Norville, have ever felt what it is to *want*,—to rise early, lie down late, no firing during the day, the bare boards at night; starving in the midst of abundance, yet knowing that the crumbs, the very offal, the food of the pampered domestic animals in the house of some wealthy neighbour, would re-nerve the strong arm, give blood to the wasted heart, or restore to life the mother of your little ones, perishing before your eyes from famine.”

“But their habitual intemperance, their want of cleanliness,—do you excuse this?”

“Certainly not: intemperance, though often in the first instance resorted to in order to still the cravings of nature or to drown mental sufferings, is still, in the eyes of Almighty God, a crime and the parent of crimes. Far be it from me to extenuate it, either in the half-starved Irish labourer, who expends his last penny in gin, or the proud English noble, who, without the same excuse, indulges the same vice at a more costly price. But for their squalor, their positive dirt, I think had we

the means, we could find the way to remove at least *that* odium (deserved as it at present is) from them."

"In that case, Josephine, you would indeed work one of the miracles for which your Church is so celebrated." This was said somewhat sarcastically, and Miss Bradshawe, with a heightened colour, continued,—

"Give me the gold, and I will work the miracle, as you so irreverently style it. The tenements at present inhabited by the lower order of Irish are the most unhealthy, dilapidated, and ill-situated for the purpose, in London; generally in the very midst of a fashionable, and therefore expensive neighbourhood, hemmed in by lofty walls, to the exclusion of every breath of fresh air, badly drained, and devoid of the very means of cleanliness. Two or three of these skeleton houses are usually taken by an individual, who lets them out in apartments at two, three, four, and in some cases five shillings a week, whereby, losses included, he himself clears a profit of about sixty per cent; and as he seldom lays out a farthing in repairs, not even to mend a square of glass, these leaseholders generally make a good thing of it. Now as it is not to be supposed the tenants can themselves afford to pay this sum for their cellar, garret, or even first floor, they in their turn take in lodgers, as many, nay more than the room can conveniently hold; and since they are obliged to give long credit, or even put up for weeks together with the chance of a coal or share of a bread ticket, in lieu of the current coin so impossible to come at, the whole speculation generally terminates by the broker being sent in, and the little articles of furniture sold, more to get rid of a tenant who can no longer pay, than for their actual

value. The dispossessed family either become lodgers in their turn, or after crouching for days, nay weeks, on stairs and in entrances, repair as a last resource to the union, where they are separated, never perhaps to meet again in this world."

"Yet I am quite sure in more respectable neighbourhoods lodgings may be had for less than you mention. I have an old pensioner who only pays five shillings a week for a comfortably-furnished room."

"Your old pensioner has not six or seven noisy half-naked children, nor will they in your 'respectable neighbourhoods' allow the rent 'to run;' but for this, I know many of our poor who would have quitted the Buildings long ago, as when out of work it is impossible to meet the weekly demands with anything like regularity."

"But what remedy, in the name of reason, could you possibly propose for so extensive an evil?"

"That of building lodging-houses—a plan I know to be already entertained by many Catholics, although, of course, it would entail considerable expense; and even as a body, I doubt if we are rich enough to make it generally beneficial, unless it could be rendered in some measure self-supporting. I mentioned this once to my uncle, but I think he imagined, instead of asylums for our poor, we intended erecting barracks, whence conspirators were to issue, ripe for the destruction of Church and State; yet if we can once procure a piece of ground, we should be inclined to try the experiment, giving in the first instance preference to such families as would subscribe to the rules (that of cleanliness, for instance, to be rigidly enforced) and endea-

vour to pay the very moderate rent fixed. After all, the public in general would be the gainers ; they would have the satisfaction of knowing that vegetables and other hawked wares are stowed for the night in airy and well-adapted places, instead of standing in the corner of an over-crowded room, or, what is just as likely, forming a portion of the bedding, lest they should be appropriated before their owners are awake. " Now," she continued, laughing, " I am quite out of breath, and only hope my plans have made a convert of you."

" Could the doctrines of your Church be as clearly explained as her views of practical charity, I should have been converted, as you call it, long ago, and I—dare I say *we*?—have been happier. I have listened to you, Miss Bradshawe, not only patiently, but with interest ; it is now my turn. " Nay," he added, taking her by the hand, and replacing her in the seat she had just quitted, " this is neither just nor generous ; hear me fairly to an end you *shall*, even if we then part for ever." Feeling the folly of resistance, Josephine reseated herself, and, after an internal aspiration for strength, prepared to listen with at least the semblance of composure.

" You cannot—it is not in human nature, however pure and exalted that nature may be—you cannot have forgotten what we once were to each other, although I now believe my feelings were the strongest, the most enduring of the two?" He paused, as though he would fain meet with contradiction, but receiving no reply, continued,—“ Ours was not the passing affection of our age ; we owed our happiness neither to birth, rank, nor fortune ; it was based on similarity of pursuits,

tastes, feelings; in short, we were friends before we were lovers; there was no opposition from relatives, no impertinent caprices of friends, to be apprehended or studied; the current of our love ran smooth, and in proportion deep; together we formed our plans, not only for our own future happiness, but for that of our fellow-creatures:—and I must interrupt myself to remind you, who are so very zealous for their welfare, that none of those plans have ever been put into execution.”

“Almighty God willed it otherwise,” answered Miss Bradshawe, calmly; “He has assigned me a fresh sphere of usefulness, more humble, and less exposed to the shafts of self-love. I am content.”

“So am not I,” said Lord Norville, bitterly. “Does not that very expression savour of selfishness? has it not ever struck you in the moments of reflection, that you had no right even to ensure your own felicity at the expense of another’s? Did you never reproach yourself as the cause of the hours my youth wasted in frivolity, not to say sin, and which you might have prevented? Did you never inquire if you were justified in rending asunder the chain you yourself had helped to forge? And for a matter so trivial, that——”

“Do you call a difference in religion, the salvation of immortal souls, a trivial matter, Lord Norville?” inquired Josephine in an accent of unfeigned astonishment. “You acted generously, nobly on the occasion, but I did my duty; true, not unrepiningly, but yet, thank God, *I did my duty.*”

“You acknowledge, then, you were not altogether

insensible to the pain you so *heroically* inflicted. I suppose you shared it in about the same degree as the surgeon feels for what his patient endures under the knife."

"Of course I was not insensible," she answered gently, willing to soothe his irritation, though more and more puzzled as to its cause. "I was grateful to you *then* ; and although circumstances have altered our relative positions, and time abated the ardour of our mutual sentiments, I am grateful to you still."

"And you are happy, Josephine?"

"I have no cause to be otherwise ; am I not fulfilling my vocation?"

"I do not understand what you mean by 'vocation,'" he petulantly rejoined ; "all I have to say is, I never disliked Catholics half so much as since you became one ; such conduct is enough to disgust any one with the religion."

"Why, what *have* I done?" she replied, with difficulty suppressing the smile which she was conscious must give pain. "I really beg your pardon if I have been the cause of scandal to you ; it was quite involuntary."

"Of course you must be aware you have for the last six years been a continual source of anxiety both to your uncle and myself. It cannot be very pleasing to him to find your talents completely thrown away ; nor to me to be liable any day to hear that you have fallen a victim to some disease engendered by contact with those whom you might more effectually benefit if you would but listen to me."

"I should indeed be grateful for any suggestion for

their greater good, poor things," said Miss Bradshawe, disregarding the former portion of his speech ; but I warn you beforehand we must have no interference from ragged-school teachers or visitors from Bible-societies. Better their bodies waste from want, than their souls perish eternally."

" You wilfully misunderstand me, Josephine. Did you not but now say, had you the means, you would find the way? those means can, shall be, yours. In one word, my engagement with Lady Angela is dissolved."

" Not on my account, I trust, Lord Norville," she exclaimed, rising with dignity ; " rest assured that——"

" No, not on your account, though you have much to reproach yourself with that it was ever entered into. From your overstrained notions of duty, your young and too yielding cousin might have been doomed to pass her life the wife of a man for whom she merely entertained a cold respect, whilst her warm heart incessantly cherished the image of another. Now, thank God, we both are free ; and whilst ensuring the happiness of Angela, it rests with you to decide how far *I* am to participate in it." Miss Bradshawe turned very pale, but not being quite unprepared for the turn the conversation had taken, she merely assumed an attitude of attention. " You recollect our parting," continued Lord Norville, " and the sacrifice I then offered to make of prejudices, interest, and, in some measure, conscience. This sacrifice you rejected ; it was, I am aware, deemed lightly of in the full-blown ardour of your recent conversion ; but if I ever admired, loved you more than at that moment, it is now, when in

renewing the offer I then made I can only add, give me but time, and I too, for thy love, may yet become a Catholic."

Miss Bradshawe's eyes filled with tears ; she trembled slightly ; then shaking her head, after a few moments' reflection, exclaimed—

"Why have you so unnecessarily exposed us both to so severe a trial ? Is not my duty the same as it was six years ago ? Can I consent to be the temptation in your path ? If for my sake you falsify your conscience, better, far better, never become a Catholic."

"I thought," said Lord Norville, bitterly, "you would risk much for the sake of gaining a convert. I have heard, your priests scruple little at the means, provided they attain the end."

"You have doubtless heard many things that are untrue, and I grieve to see have yielded easy credence to them ; with you I must therefore be explicit. Know then, whatever my feelings might otherwise be, I hold a mixed marriage as displeasing in the sight of God, and prejudicial to the spiritual interest of all concerned."

"This is indeed scrupulosity. I could name many instances where friends of my own are married to Catholics, a convincing proof that your Church permits—"

"The Church *permits*, as you have truly said, but does not *countenance* such unions. Believe me, where they do take place, they are generally productive of much misery, sometimes undying remorse, and this in proportion to the affection between the parties. Would they could be altogether prevented ; but this the present state of society renders impossible."

"And you deny that you are a bigot? But, Josephine, I have an argument stronger than any I have advanced; can you in conscience refuse the infinitely wider field for the benefit of others which wealth such as mine would open before you? As a Catholic, do you, *dare* you refuse my offer?"

"Were you a Catholic, I should answer, Almighty God would accept no offering, however it might otherwise redound to His greater glory, if made at the expense of conscience; as it is, I can merely say, let this be the last time the subject is broached between us. I am neither cold nor insensible, and deeply do I grieve that an accidental meeting should have re-awakened sentiments I had hoped had long since taken another direction."

"Then, Miss Bradshawe, I am again refused." He drew himself up to his full height, mortified pride and wounded affection struggling for mastery in his bosom. "Catholics are indeed mere machines, beings without individuality, heart, or—"

"*Heart* has nothing to do with my present decision, Lord Norville; I am simply following the safe yet more rugged path of duty. Would that I could convince you of this, or do anything to soften your present disappointment."

"How can you convince me that affection for another, not this duty of which you talk so earnestly, does not influence your conduct?"

"Easily," said Josephine. "Edgar, hear me. I loved you once; I love you still, though with a purer, better-tryed affection, for now I prize your immortal soul, and never will I peril that soul; never will I

lure you on by what might be a merely human motive to profess the faith, which I would otherwise lay down my life to see you embrace ; yet solemnly do I promise never to bestow on another the hand I now refuse to you, though you would secure my happiness by wedding one more worthy of you than her of whom you must now think no more."

There was an energy in Josephine's manner, a lofty determination in her tone, which carried conviction to Lord Norville's mind and agony to his breast. He could not trust himself to speak, but pressing her hand to his lips, hurried from the room to conceal the tear which was wrung from his proud heart ; yet as he did so he involuntarily exclaimed—

"This, then, is a member of that religion stigmatized as sparing no art to entrap converts, no means to acquire wealth, and above all, of keeping no faith with those of a different persuasion. God, not man, must have prompted such a sacrifice."

CHAPTER XII.

THE CHOLERA.

It will be long ere the August of 1849 fades from the memory of the present generation, more especially those whose business or duty retained them in London during a season now become a mournful epoch in the lives of many. For more than twelve months previously had the cholera been talked of and expected, nay its very route was distinctly traced ; the sea-winds

laden with the deadly moisture of the Mediterranean, had swept over every tract of inhabited land, ravaging, and in many cases partially depopulating, the whole chain of countries from Affghanistan to Southern Africa, from whence the transition to Central Europe was both natural and swift. The intense heat of the preceding summer, when the temperature had for months averaged 90°, had occasioned a disorder which, though modified, was so suspicious in its nature, that a medical board was formed to watch its progress, whilst sanitary committees were called upon to bestir themselves, in order, if possible, to avert the impending calamity.

But this mysterious disease seemed to baffle their every effort, setting at nought any fixed rule either for prevention or cure. Capricious in its attacks, it would in some instances pass over the habitually dissipated, to descend with fell swoop on those who had never infringed the laws of temperance; though it must be remarked, that recovery was in the latter class of patients more general, as the complaint usually assumed a milder form, probably owing to the action of the lungs being less impeded. The inhabitants of confined, ill-ventilated neighbourhoods were of course the greatest sufferers; but the mansions of the wealthy were far from being exempted from the visitation of a pestilence esteemed by many, and those not contemptible authorities, to be identical with the "black death" or "sweating sickness," which had for centuries visited Persia, Asia Minor, and Europe itself.

And London at the period of which I write was truly a "city of the plague;" go where you would, the

funeral crossed your path, though unheeded in the bustle of business or amusement. Strange to say, a town-funeral carries no warning, no moral to the hearts of those to whom it is as every-day an occurrence as the city omnibus, or the light, neck-endangering carts of the Parcels Delivery Company. Who in the tumult of life has time to sorrow for the dead? Yet even the casual observer could not fail remarking how frequently the fresh mourning habiliments bespoke the recent loss, or the closed shutters pointed out where the corpse remained still unburied. Talk with whom you would, the cholera formed the theme; contagion, non-contagion, the efficacy of friction, bleeding, wet sheets, were discussed by all. The most opposite opinions were strenuously advocated: new to alleviate by a single drop of water that burning thirst, which constitutes one of the most excruciating torments of the disease, was certain death; at another time, copious effervescing draughts were an almost equally certain cure. And hence it happened in many cases (especially amongst the poor), that positively nothing was done by the paralyzed-attendants, until the mass of blood, refusing to flow, thickened within the distended veins, forced clammy moisture from every pore, and gave to the skin that deadly tinge of blue which, when accompanied by lethargy and want of pulse, announced the stage of collapse, as fatal, though less painful than the more active state of fever, where spasms and nausea produce sufferings fearful to behold, and in most cases impossible to ameliorate.

It is scarcely necessary to mention that the courts and alleys with which this great metropolis is every

where intersected were peculiarly exposed to the inroads of a disorder, the general agents of which are atmospheric vapours and intercepted currents, whether produced by impassable mountains and dense forests, or the close streets, high walls, and narrow, low-pitched rooms, which man delights to erect in every large city, as though to torture and debase his fellow-man; to say nothing of the impure gas inhaled from rotten vegetables, and the still more deadly miasma of the human breath when confined within an apartment without any legitimate means of ventilation, and situated perhaps several feet below the surface of the earth.

Probably none laboured more under the twofold scourge of sickness and want than the inhabitants of C—— Buildings. The workhouse doctors were at first tolerably prompt in their attendance; and as the sufferers were in most cases immediately removed to the hospitals, the living were spared that awful proximity with a corpse, where putrefaction in some measure preceded death itself. But even this trifling alleviation to human misery was not, could not be, of long duration; the hospitals and infirmaries became crowded, and it was an every-day occurrence to see beds filled in the morning with cholera patients who were borne to the dead-house in the forenoon, their berth before night to be again occupied by fresh sufferers. The poor Irish looked upon the public institutions to which they were carried with unmitigated horror. It was not that all that circumstances permitted was not done to alleviate their pain; the nurses were kind, the house-surgeons indefatigable, and to *some* of the hospitals their priests had easy access, so

that there was little fear of *their* dying without the sacraments. Still, it grieved them to see their Protestant neighbours (it is a sad truth, but truth must be told) expire without any one to share their last moments, no one to read to them or talk to them, unless some Catholic, like the good Samaritan, stood by their side and whispered words of consolation, avoiding controversy—for what could it *then* avail, when the moments of the sinner were already numbered? But can we conscientiously blame the Protestant minister? In most cases the married father of a large family, and with a sincere conviction that his presence at a death-bed could be of no real benefit; who, I say, could condemn him if, following the dictates of nature, he left others to perform what any one might do as well as himself, and studied the preservation of those to whom he might convey contagion, and for whose temporal advantage he had perhaps adopted his profession? Many and painful were the scenes to which this neglect gave rise, and amongst them to one which, though fortunate in its results, would, but for the Divine mercy, have proved otherwise.*

So long expected and talked of, the cholera had taken none, much less Catholics, unawares; Josephine had therefore, some time before its real outbreak, chalked out the line she felt herself called upon to pursue. On the disorder she had read much, consulted many, and, being of a naturally fearless disposition, she could not consider it a duty to abandon the care of the poor because it

* The reader must not forget that there were honourable exceptions to this rule, *e. g.* in the clergy of St. Saviour's, Leeds, and others.

might be attended with risk to herself; she was so far a non-contagionist as to believe it was only in the dead body that infection lay, although, before the cessation of the pestilence, she had more than one convincing proof that her rule was not without its exceptions. Ere the disease had raged so fearfully as to render the hospitals a secondary consideration, Miss Bradshawe was in the habit of visiting them, to say a few prayers for such as were already prepared, and to see that none ran a risk of perishing without spiritual assistance. It was on one of these occasions, as she was about to depart, that a woman, who lay in a bed in the corner of one of the wards, shrieked after her in a voice of thrilling agony, "For God's sake, madam, just come here; I am dying." Josephine obeyed, and discovered an elderly female, one of the helpers, but now herself a patient, struggling with all the violence of unimpaired muscular strength against the spasmodic action of the nerves. She had evidently passed from the state of collapse into that of active fever; the cramps now seizing the limbs alternately, now fixing on all together, requiring the force of three or four attendants to prevent the patient flinging herself out of bed. The spasms having settled in the chest and upper extremities, the countenance presented the appearance of a corpse after disinterment, the whole body being of an indigo tint, rendered still more ghastly by the lack-lustre eyes, and lips at once swollen, black, and parched. By the side of this pitiable object sat an elderly man, weeping; his dress and manners betokening that he moved in a grade of society superior to that of the unfortunate woman.

"Miss Bradshawe," she gasped rather than uttered,

"this, this is worse than hell! Do you call it charity to hang over your own people, and leave me to perish because I am a Protestant?"

"I did not know you were ill, Johnson," answered Josephine, taking in hers one of the cold glazed hands, and pressing it affectionately. "What can I do for you? only tell me."

"I sent for the clergyman—but—he did not come. Can you bring me a Wesleyan preacher? Anything; I care not, so he can save my soul. I have been a great sinner—and—no I dare not die as I am—they told the chaplain I had the cholera, but he said nurse could read me a chapter in the Bible. Will no one help me?"

A frightful scream terminated these disjointed sentences, whilst the nurses laboured in vain to give temporary ease, by applying flannels steeped in turpentine to the legs and stomach. During this, the man before mentioned rose from his seat, and in a broken voice addressed Miss Bradshawe:—

"Madam, I am a butler in a nobleman's family, and that unfortunate being is my sister. I need scarcely say it was her way of life that reduced her to becoming the helper in a parish infirmary; we have not met for years, though I heartily forgive the disgrace she has brought on her family. I implore you, if it lies in your power, to ameliorate her distress of mind. What renders her so wretched is, that she has never been baptized, and some one has put it into her head she cannot go to heaven without."

"No," exclaimed the sufferer, "I am not a Christian; Mary told me so before she died. She had the cholera

worse than I have, and the priest came to her, and stayed with her, and did not seem afraid at all, and she was so tranquil after, though her agony made *us* tremble, and she expired so happily; and here am I left to go like a dog."

"If you really wish for baptism," answered Miss Bradshawe, "I will send Father Horton, though I fear there will be little time for instruction."

"God bless you; I feel sure I cannot be saved unless I am baptized, and I know your religion must be the true one, or why are you so anxious for your poor when they are dying? It cannot, I have often thought, be a pleasant thing for ladies and gentlemen to come here at all hours; and they wouldn't do it either, unless there was more need than we knew of. But oh, be quick, or it will be too late; I have been so great a sinner, I dare not face God as I am." Suppressing her emotion, Josephine hurried towards the chapel-house; Father Horton was at dinner, but it needed no second summons to despatch him on his errand of mercy.

On her visit to the cholera-ward the following day, Miss Bradshawe learnt, to her inexpressible satisfaction, that although Johnson had expired the preceding night, she had not only been baptized, but received the sacrament of extreme unction, leaving with almost her last breath a blessing for her, to whom, as the instrument of Almighty God, she was indebted for procuring the means of salvation.

Never, probably, had the priests of the London district to contend with such an accumulation of physical sufferings, distress, and misery, as during this

eventful summer ; and it is here worthy of remark, that although continually exposed to contagion, hard worked during the day, and with scarcely two consecutive nights' rest unbroken by sick-calls, not one of them fell a victim to a disease whose ravages were felt by every other class of society. Yet their exertions were almost superhuman ; for although the locality where I have fixed my tale belonged to a chapel neither considered to possess so large or so poor a congregation as many in the metropolis, it might perhaps excite some surprise in the bosoms of those who accuse Catholics of "neglecting the education of their poor," and making no efforts "to keep pace with the age," were they told this *small* congregation averaged *twelve thousand*, of whom during the year full *ten thousand* at one season or other require relief, some only occasionally, others at all times ; about a thousand subsist on their own industry ; and the remainder are able, in a greater or less degree, to assist their poorer brethren, and to contribute towards the support of a Church which in this country depends entirely on the piety of its members, and their zeal for the religion they profess. Now to contend with this mass of human wretchedness, how many were the labourers in the vineyard ? Four ! at the best of times inadequate to meet the spiritual wants of their flocks ; but the demand for priests over the whole district being so great, no additional assistance could be procured. So they girded themselves for the task ; the harvest to be reaped was plentiful, and they prepared to enter the field in the very teeth of death itself, not only without

a murmur, but with joyful alacrity ; not from any enthusiasm of the moment, but with the same lofty resolve, the same generous self-denial, which characterized the martyrs of old, which *will* characterize the pastors of God's Church even to the end of the world. 'Tis true the Catholic priests, though their numbers when compared to the ministers of the Established Church in the immediate neighbourhood were as but one to twenty, possessed over the latter an advantage which more than compensated for this deficiency. The black banner of plague was unfurled, the red flag of famine met them at every turn ; but *they* had no hometies to keep them back ; their bride was religion, their children the poor ; and whilst a coin remained in their purses, they could share it with the destitute, without a scruple of robbing those whose prior claims were advocated by nature herself. Nearly three years have elapsed ; we can now look back upon that fearful time as on an event that is past ; the excitement is over ; we view things as they *were*, and it perplexes us more and more when we reflect how much was done, how little left undone. The numerous offices of the Church proceeded as usual ; there were the seven services on Sundays and holydays of obligation, the daily masses, marriages, baptisms ; the long hours spent in the confessional oftentimes stretched far into the night, for the fear of impending death drove many to that sacred tribunal who had absented themselves for years. Even from this would the priest be summoned to the bed of death ; did he find rest on his return ? No, one duty accomplished, he hastened to another, never

dreaming of refreshment or repose whilst one soul remained to which he could either afford consolation or assistance ; and then, when these offices of charity were done, twenty chances to one but a portion of his breviary still remained to be recited ; and when at last he threw himself on his bed, it was only to be roused by a fresh sick-call, almost before his eyes were closed to sleep. There are few Catholics to whom all this is not well known ; but if perchance these pages should reach the eye of any who differ from us in creed, let them remember that these are the men (not indeed these very individuals, but the class of which they are a fair sample) on whom the Protestant journals consider no calumny too gross to be heaped ; against whom the orators not only of Exeter Hall, but of assemblies where more toleration might be expected, inasmuch as their members are considered superior both in point of birth and intellect, publicly declaim ; whilst in more private meetings they are gravely accused of violating the whole criminal code from petty larceny up to murder, and that too with an impunity which, in a country so remarkable for the vigilance of its detective officers, is indeed little short of miraculous. These, too, are they to whom the epithets “ slothful,” “ avaricious,” and “ designing,” are the milder terms applied in every-day conversation, and on whose actions the most glaring misconstructions are placed ; and all this is done or said—by the prejudiced and illiterate ? no, but by those who on other points exhibit a clear-sightedness and depth of judgment which cause them to be looked up to by their fellow-creatures ; thus adding the

poison of influence to the arrow already barbed, we would fain hope, by ignorance.

Over C—— Buildings the death-blast swept with all its fury, rendering impotent every attempt to arrest or even to weaken its force. Rare indeed were the cases in which the victim was snatched back to life, sometimes perishing before medical aid could be procured, often dying whilst an attempt was being made for his removal, but in scarce a solitary instance passing away without the assistance of a priest ; and even then through no fault of his, but because he was not made acquainted with the attack until the vital spark had fled. In the front attic of one of the houses in the turn-court a family had resided for years, multiplying of course until the room seemed too small even to hold them ; yet there they remained, literally *packed* at night, absorbing almost every portion of oxygen, until in lieu of atmospheric air a species of animal humidity was produced, acting as poison on the frames of those by whom it was inhaled.

It was about half-past ten on the Sunday before the Assumption, that Miss Bradshawe, who had attended an early Mass, entered the Buildings, anxious to ascertain how it fared with one of the younger girls, who had, it was supposed, been attacked by the dire disease. In a corner of the turn-court her attention was arrested by a group of school-children, standing clustered together, perfectly quiet, and with an air of mysterious importance. In the hands of a few were the well-known purple-covered hymn-books, and after a preli-

minary pause the two following stanzas reached the ear of Josephine :—

“ Faith of our Fathers ! living still,
 In spite of dungeon, fire and sword,
 Oh, how our hearts beat high with joy
 Whene’er we hear that glorious word !
 Faith of our Fathers ! holy Faith !
 We will be true to thee till death.

* * * *

“ Faith of our Fathers ! Mary’s prayers
 Shall win our country back to thee,
 And through the truth that comes from God
 England shall then indeed be free.
 Faith of our Fathers ! holy Faith !
 We will be true to thee till death.”

As the voices ceased, Miss Bradshawe advanced, and instantly recognised an unusual solemnity in the manner of the little ones, which led her to inquire its cause.

“ Why then, miss, isn’t it poor Ellen that’s dying up there, an’ she used to like the hymn, an’ it’s singing it undher the windey quite gently we were, just to plaze her for the last time.”

“ I’m feer’d miss,” said the elder girl, “ it’s not prayin’ for her they’H be ; mother heer’d them quarrelin’ all nite ; an’ when I stole in to bid her good-bye, she said she hoped the Blessel Virgin ad mind an’ fetch her on the Assumption, becaze it was the anniversary of her first communion.”

“ Almighty God will fetch her when He thinks fit,” said Josephine, laying her hand on the child’s head. “ Now go away without noise, and don’t forget to pray

for her when you are at Mass, although I would rather none of you went into the room again."

Thus cautioned, they departed without any signs of their usual mirth, each dropping a curtesy to Miss Bradshawe, and casting a wistful glance at the window of the room where their playfellow lay in so hopeless a condition. Josephine immediately ascended the stairs; but although she knocked at the door more than once, so great was the bustle within, she could not succeed in making herself heard, and was at length compelled to enter without invitation. Here, indeed, she encountered a scene of confusion; the inroads of the pestilence during the last four-and-twenty hours had been terrific. A couple of beds, which almost filled the chamber, were let down and tenanted; whilst in the spaces between were stretched two strong men labouring under the pangs of approaching dissolution, groaning, gasping, and in the violence of the cramps throwing off those who tried to minister to their relief. Amongst this latter number was Mrs. Casey, who, kneeling on the ground, her arms bared to the elbow, was rubbing away at the legs of one of the sufferers until big drops of perspiration stood on the forehead of the kind-hearted old creature.

"Arrah, now, Jack Rourke! be aisey, can't ye, mee darlin'; first one leg, then anither! its enuff to frighten a horse from his oats, to say nothin' of a Christian, to hear the crathers. Ah then, Miss Bradshawe, it's welkin you are at all saysons. What 'll I do? musha, its meeself doesn't know who's alive at all!"

"Och, miss, it's a fearful nite we've had of it," said the wife of the patient, who, almost beside herself with

terror, was hurrying from one bed to another, anon casting distracted glances on the floor. "Father Morgan was here wid me sisther about twelve, an' poor little Nelly died as he was laving the room, an' now the min are down ; an' its meesilf an' Meggy has our hands full of it."

"Jist kum and luk at the baby, miss," urged Meggy, pulling Josephine's sleeve, and pointing towards the bed on which Mrs. Mulvin lay ; "it wouldn't be quiet with Nelly, becasse she can't talk to it now she's dead, so we gave it to aunt, an' it skrames worse nor iver ; we think it's cowl'd it tuk, for I was obliged to carry it when I ran for the praste last nite, for there was no one to mind it for me."

"It is hungry," said Miss Bradshawe, compassionately, as she observed the poor little thing vainly endeavouring to draw the nourishment which was completely dried up by fever. "You had better ask some of those who have infants to nurse it for a time."

"Indeed an' I did," answered Mrs. Rourke ; "but there was no gettin' them to let it near them ; it's afeard of the cholera the lot av them are."

"I am fearful it will not escape," exclaimed Josephine, as she reluctantly placed the famished infant beside the body of little Ellen. "You had better, Mrs. Rourke, send to the workhouse for an order to bury this poor child, or all your lives will be endangered."

"Bury the corse is it ? afore its bided a nite undher the roof wid me ! It's what I'd never consint to, if it were to be the saving of me siven generations."

"Yet remember yourself; Meggy, — your sick husband, Mulvin,—indeed some of them ought to be removed to the infirmary."

"Let them tak' them an' welkim; but I'll not have my child moved till we've passed the nite over her: the neybour's ud think us worse than haythens if we hadn't the frinds."

"Now Mrs. Rourke," said old Norry, wiping her brow, as she paused in her work of charity, "can't ye be said by Miss Bradshawe? Sure an' don't she know more than all the docthers in the parish? an' didn't she save the life of my Jim wid the limonade, when it was meesilf was afther dosing him wid the whisky?"

"That was a different case, Norry," answered Josephine, with a sigh. "Has Rourke been prepared? for I fear he will not recover."

"Indeed an' he wasn't ill when Father Morgan was here; an' it's nayther on um 'll be the worse for the praste, but there's no one to sind; I can't spare Meggy, an' what 'll I do? But God is good!"

"I will let one of the priests know directly; but how you will contrive with so many in one room—"

"An it's meesilf doesn't know; but as Jack's the worst, I spose we must drag him into next doore; it's empty it is, since Missis O'Brian went to the House, an' I think there's a hape of shavings in the corner."

Finding she could render no real assistance, Miss Bradshawe hurried towards the chapel, and on entering the sacristy found it not quite so easy to fulfil her promise as she had imagined. Father Wilford had said the ten o'clock Mass, but had been hurried away immediately afterwards, without breaking his fast,

to Cato Street, where one of the "carriers" had been brought home in a state of spasmodic cholera; the three remaining chaplains were ready vested, about to enter the sanctuary, when a few whispered words to Father Morgan, who was to officiate as deacon, caused him instantaneously to exchange dalmatic and alb for his walking attire, whilst his brother priests proceeded to the altar without him. Josephine knelt down in the sacristy, and the sermon had just commenced when a peal of the bell, which was repeated before it could possibly be answered, sent the sacristan in all haste to the door. "A man was dying in Cleveland Street; he hadn't been to his duty for forty years an' more; an' the baby was jist off, an' worse luck it hadn't been baptized." There was of course no time to be lost, the place was full a mile distant; a sign was therefore made to Father Horton, who, quitting the pulpit somewhat abruptly, was obliged to depart without refreshment of any kind, that being his fifth sick-call since seven that morning.

"What shall we do now?" inquired the sacristan, positively scared by the predicament in which he found himself; "the Mass must proceed, and—hark! there is the bell again." This time it was an English convert, pale and breathless with haste. His father, who had long wished to become a Catholic, but had postponed it from day to day, had been seized by the disease in its most hideous form; collapse, accompanied by cold sweats, had already placed him beyond the power of medicine; and being a man of powerful frame, his sufferings were proportionately intense. He raved continually for a priest, his medical attendants having

decided it was impossible he could hold out for more than an hour. Miss Bradshawe and the sacristan gazed on each other with countenances pale with dismay. Mass could not be over in less than half an hour; there was no knowing when either of the absent chaplains might return, as it was more than possible that though summoned to one, they would find several others requiring assistance on their road to and fro. In this emergency a sudden thought struck Miss Bradshawe. "This person," she exclaimed, "does not live far from Cleveland Street: give me the baptismal water, I will follow Father Horton, and send him there before he returns home." As there really was nothing else to be done, her request was acceded to. The young priest was found; and after spending more than an hour over a man semi-stupified by laudanum and disease, he was hurried to the bedside of a second, struggling with the pestilence in its most agonizing and unmitigated form. Prompt as he was, he was only just in time; the procrastinator expired before he quitted the house, although the first sufferer lay for nearly a week in a state of collapse, totally deprived of consciousness, almost of motion. Nor was Father Morgan more fortunate. Rourke and Mrs. Mulvin died before night, the infant not long afterwards, Mulvin himself the middle of the following day, and poor Mrs. Rourke, being attacked immediately, expired in eleven hours, leaving Meggy not only the last of her family, but the sole living inmate of a room which three days before had contained no less than seven persons in full health and strength. *This is no imaginary scene.* So rapid had been the progress of the plague, so virulent and deadly

its effects, that at one and the same time, even in this confined space, there lay a pining child, a man momentarily awaiting dissolution, the half-putrid bodies of two already dead, and one within whose veins the poison lurked which in so short a space was to curdle the healthy blood, cause stagnation round the lungs, and consequent death.

These were by no means the only victims of those two fearful days. The quiet of Mrs. Selby's abode was disturbed on the Monday morning, not by one, but by a continuous succession of peals, first on the visitors', then the servants' bell; and as there was no intermission between the startling sounds, this generally quiet household was so frightened from its propriety, that a considerable time elapsed before the opening of the door occasioned a cessation of the din. A tall, powerful man, who, though well known to our readers as Pat Sheehan, was yet a stranger to the very orderly and somewhat antique-looking dame who, in snowy apron and pink streamers, answered the ring, "just to see what it could possibly mean," and, drawing herself up in all the dignity of cook and housekeeper, demanded the business of the intruder, and how "he dared pull the wisitors' bell in that ere violent manner, to the imminent risk of damaging not only the wires, but the organs of her (Mrs. Bevan's) ears."

"Sure an' me good woman, jist spake aisey, and be afther bein' quick if you plaze, an' tell Miss Bradshawe its wanthing her I am on partic'lar business, or it's not so airly I'd be thrubblin' her."

"Good woman, indeed ! well I'm sure !" ejaculated the stately dame, crimsoning with indignation. "Miss

Bradshawe is at breakfast, and you'll please to leave your name and message with me, for—"

"Indeed an' what use ud that be? My name's Pat Sheehan; jist mintion it, will you, me darlin'; she'll see me directly, an' no harm done ayther."

"It's of no use; you must call again. I knows what a proper hour is, if Miss Bradshawe doesn't. She's with Mrs. Selby; and I knows my place too, better than to carry *impertinent* messages."

And Mrs. Bevan made an attempt to close the door she held in her hand, so as to put a stop to all farther parley with so importunate a beggar, for such in the recesses of her heart had she designated Pat. But the latter was not to be so easily repulsed. Anticipating the good lady's movements, he seized her by the waist, twisted her completely round, and before she had recovered sufficiently to express her sense of outraged propriety, reached the parlour-door, uncereemoniously turning the handle he stood in the presence of Josephine and her aunt, just as the latter was about to ring for the purpose of inquiring the cause of the disturbance. The flushed countenance and excited manner of the uncouth being before her changed Mrs. Selby's curiosity into positive alarm. Dropping with a faint scream the morsel of toast she was in the act of conveying to her mouth, she caught up the nearest knife, though whether with an idea of preventing its being used by the intruder, or of herself acting on the defensive, is an enigma which we cannot solve.

"Why, Sheehan," exclaimed her niece, rather surprised at the apparition, "what is the matter?"

"Musha, miss, I beg yer pardon, but the owld lady

outside stood so long considerin' if it was a pickpocket I was or not, that I was feared it was too late intirely I'd be; and it's about off the poor craythur is by this time, so it was of no use to stand palavering there."

"Come, what is it all about?" inquired Josephine, who wished to avert the bursting of the storm that was gathering on Mrs. Selby's brow. "You should have sent in your message as you were desired; it would have been attended to quite as quickly."

"Send in me message, an' it about life an' deth! No, miss, I know me duty betther than that any day. But if it's Norry Casey you'd like to go off like a dog, why I've done."

And aware that he had effectually roused Miss Bradshawe's sympathy, he turned towards the door as if about to depart, with an air of offended dignity, which would under other circumstances have aroused her risible faculties.

"Nay, Sheehan," she exclaimed, "I really cannot understand you; Norry was quite well yesterday."

"Why then, miss, it's ded she's intirely to-day. Didn't she catch the cholera, I'd like to know? An' hasn't the clargy been wid her before airly Mass? An' isn't there somethin' on her mind she can't die wid? So she towld me to come to you an'—"

"Now, Josephine, I really will not allow this," interrupted Mrs. Selby, at length finding utterance. "You are neither a *priest*, nor a *nun*, nor yet an *hospital nurse*; and if the woman has anything on her mind, let her send for the former."

"Saving yer presence, me lady, the clargy's been

wid her. But it's a request she has; an' I'll tell her, miss, it's yersilf 'll lose no time, will I?"

Miss Bradshawe nodded assent, and shortly after Pat's disappearance, escaped from the breakfast-room, equally eager to avoid her aunt's lectures, and to discover what really was the matter with old Norry.

It was not very long before she reached the Buildings and commenced the somewhat perilous descent of Mrs. Casey's cellar. A low moaning struck her ear, which at intervals amounted to a groan: after *feeling* her way along the passage, Josephine rounded the corner, and entering the doorway, stood within the abode described in a previous chapter. It was, however, so dark, that for a few moments she could discern nothing distinctly; a human figure was crouching by the side of the half-dead embers, though enveloped in a cloud of smoke, which made her eyes tingle and caused her to gasp for breath, whilst a restless movement on the floor at the other end pointed out the place occupied by the sufferer.

"God be wid you, miss, yer kum at last," exclaimed a voice which she had no difficulty in recognising as that of Jim Casey; "a sorry day it is for me to see me poor girl dying before me eyes an' laving me all alone wid no one to look afther me. See then, an' Heaven bless you, is it this time she'll die?"

"It is so dark, Casey, I cannot see," answered Josephine; "have you no candle?"

"I think there's a bit on that shelf overhead; I'm a poor cripple, an' can't rache it meesilf. Here, stand on that owld baskit, an' mind yer dress don't take the fire; ye'll find it undher the cracked mug; there's no keeping

anythin' for them impidint rats." Accustomed to similar contrivances, Miss Bradshawe mounting the frail support succeeded in reaching the treasure, which being with considerable difficulty lighted, she approached Norry, who was a great favourite, not only with her visitor, but with all who knew her. The poor old woman was evidently in the most acute agony; her limbs were drawn together as if the muscles had shrunk, although at intervals they were suddenly stretched out as by the action of an invisible pulley, then recoiling until she assumed almost the appearance of a ball. It was of her arms, however, that she chiefly complained; in the palm of either hand was a round spot of deep black surrounded by what appeared gangrene, from which up to the very elbow the dark hue prevailed, though gradually diminishing in intensity, until it assumed the prevailing bluish tint so often alluded to.

"Ah, an' it was rubbin' Jack Rourke I tuk it," she exclaimed, spreading out the affected members before Josephine, who felt her heart sicken within her. "It's all over wid me, my lady, an' glory to His holy name, it's prepared I am; but there's a thing thrubbles me, an' if you'd promise me to see to that, I'd die contint." The girl hesitated, a painful thrill pervaded her bosom; gladly, most gladly, would she have given an unreserved promise to comply with the request of this martyr to charity, but prudence whispered "no." She had more than once mourned over her inability to fulfil the last wishes of the expiring poor, and she was reluctantly compelled to inquire what it was that Norry required.

"Ownly jist nothin', me lady. You see poor Jim there isn't able to look afther himself, an' it'll break

his owld heart if it's sent to the poor-house he is, an' I don't think it's long the craythur 'll be afther me ; for, barrin' the cat that follys him wheriver he goes, an' lays on the bed when I'm out, there's no Christian in the warld to care for him now I'm gone."

" Ah, an' it's not far out you're there, Norry," sobbed the disabled creature, as the sleek animal at his feet leaped on his knee, as if she too were petitioning for her master. " I couldn't bide in the house, wid the cursing, and swearing, an' jeering at everything good ; an' what ud I do for the tay an' the snuff ? An' worse nor all, what ud I do for you, Norry ? Blessed's the day I saw you, though it's not long ago ayther, an' now for you to go home before me," and a fresh burst of tears choked his utterance, whilst his tabby favourite testified her sympathy by rubbing her face against his, patting him with her large paw, and purring with all her might.

" Look at them, miss ; aint they a purty pair ? What a stoopid you are, Jim, to be shure," ejaculated Mrs. Casey, with a burst of something like her former energy ; " but I'm not long for this warld ; an' I was thinkin', as the stall's here an' the baskit's all safe, if Jim had a little to begin, he could sell cresses, an' may be young onyons an' cowcumbers in the sayson. There's one Lanhahin does a little that way himsilf, an' I'm thinkin' he'd market for Jim, an' the boys ud lend him a help in the marning, an' maybe bring him an' the stall home at nite ; but it's betther he'd not meddle wid the swates, or it ud be a temptation to the craythurs. Now, me lady, I expict you'll promise him sixpence a week to keep up the stock, an' it's happy I'd be, for

I'd know he'd niver want, an' I spose there'll be a bit for the cat, an' she'll bide wid him an' comfort him." Cheerfully did Josephine pledge herself to allow the sum which was to elevate Mr. Casey above the possibility of poverty; and Norry having settled her temporary concerns so much to her satisfaction, returned to those of her immortal soul, the care of which she had happily never neglected during life, and therefore had no cause to tremble at death even in its present appalling aspect.

"The holy Virgin guard you, Miss Bradshawe; the pain's aiser, an' it's not long I'll last. Jist kneel down an' read me the litanies; an' Jim, as you can't stoop, lave off crying like an omadhaun, an' be afther prayin' for me poor sowl; an' Father Morgan 'll say the mass for me, an' the saints 'll pray for me, so it's in pace I'll die."

Josephine obeyed; placing the morsel of candle on the edge of Norry's bed, bending her knee, she continued reading until the expiring light rendered it impossible, although sometimes interrupted by the old woman, whose senses were apparently wandering. She would murmur the "Hail Mary," then call Jim, and once the name of Kate Gearey passed her lips. At length all was silent, and as Miss Bradshawe arose, she placed her hand on her brow, thinking she slept. An involuntary shudder ran through her frame at the cold clammy contact; but unwilling to alarm Jim, she groped her way to the front kitchen, and having borrowed a light returned. Her surmises were correct: Norry Casey was indeed dead.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE RECOGNITION.

IN the north end of London, some distance from the localities I have endeavoured to depict, is a nest of streets intersecting each other in every possible direction, chiefly occupying the space between Lisson Grove and the Edgeware Road, which, from the circumstance of infamy of every description being rife amongst its inhabitants, has not been inaptly denominated (in the report of the City Mission) "the St. Giles's of the West." This (and I rejoice to say it) is *not* an Irish neighbourhood; to use an expressive blunder, "infidelity and atheism are the established *religions* of the district;" the grossest ignorance prevails, the only place of worship patronized by the majority of the dense population being a Mormonite chapel, generally tolerably filled. There is, of course, little affinity between the inmates of——Buildings and those of the particular street to which, for a very brief space, I must request the company of my reader; although the place itself is tolerably decent in appearance, and undisturbed by the outward confusion which characterizes the aforesaid Buildings, I must still wish that this want of intercourse between them may long continue. Avoided by the inhabitants of a really respectable vicinity, marked by the police as containing so many dens of iniquity where crime is remorselessly perpetrated, and where the guilty would find encouragement to evade, if not security to defeat, the strong arm of the law they had violated, you might yet pass through this street in the early part of the day suspect-

ing nothing ; you might even turn into one of the small shops with which it abounds, make your purchase and depart, still ignorant of its true character. But the hours wear on ; groups of men in the prime of life assemble at the corners, gambling away the few pence they possess, whilst curses loud and deep startle the ears of the passers-by at each fresh loss ; pedlars with trays begin to pace up and down the pavement ; others with bundles of tracts, but of such a nature as would have disgraced even infidel France, when the banner of the Cross was for a time trampled down, and licentiousness of the most revolting description enshrined as a deity. Return towards midnight, every sense will be sickened by the moral degradation at which human nature, unsustained by any fixed principle of religion, is here seen to arrive. From whom comes that ribald jest, those obscene expressions, that bold laugh ? —from the hardened and old in vice ? Not so ; but from the *child*, young in all save sin. Mark that form so slight, so fragile ; the bounding step of early youth is there, and at an hour when all like her should be sleeping the healthful unbroken slumber of innocence. Perhaps she was at first an unwilling wanderer, decoyed into the haunts of evil by those who gloried in teaching their victims to emulate the infamy of their own mis-spent existence : but mark her now ; the eye wild with intemperance, the lip whitened by disease, the cheek hollowed, pallid with sin, sorrow, and carking hunger ; or rendered still more horridly ghastly by the dull staring red with which art strives to hide the ravages of a premature old age, and to the terrors of which no description can do justice. Nor is age itself less

depraved : it weaves its meshes like the bloated spider ; alternately busy in endeavours to entrap the unwary, or preying on those already entangled in a web from which there is little chance of escape, until their thread is snapped, sometimes by personal violence, oftener by the slow lingerings of disease, which terminates an existence hateful to its possessor, and remembered but with execration by survivors to whom it has bequeathed as a legacy the fatal example which, if followed, must inevitably entail on them a similar destruction. As may be readily surmised, the male portion of the inhabitants are on a par with their female companions. Here crime is reduced to a system : from their earliest infancy children are punished for inconvenient honesty : houses are established in which burglars, pickpockets, malefactors of every description, find—the elder, a refuge, the younger, academies where they are regularly trained to whatever department of vice they may think fit to adopt for their future subsistence.

Near the farther end of the street is a passage between two houses, leading to a very steep flight of steps, covered by a bricked arch stretching some distance into what you at length discover to be a long narrow court, although you must penetrate the semi-obscurity for a considerable time before you discover the strip of sky which canopies the tall contracted dwellings ; not one of these houses can boast a back window or outlet of any kind save that by which you enter. Bad as the street is, the court is still worse, though possessing an incalculable advantage in the eyes of the declaimers against Popery ; the inmates (with *very* rare exceptions) are, if not exactly stanch Pro-

testants, what is next door to it, "*strict anti-Catholics.*" A score of Bible-readers might work away here without being shocked by rosaries, crosses, relics, prayer-books, or other weapons of Roman superstition ; the people can go comfortably out of the world without having their consciences disturbed by "meddling priests or still more meddling laymen ;" there are no sons of the sainted Vincent, no Sisters of Mercy (all well known as "*disguised Jesuits*") flitting to and fro ; after the body is once under-ground, the warning and individual are speedily forgotten by those whose principal anxiety is "to die game" when their turn comes.

In an upper chamber of one of the largest houses of the court—(one, it may be remarked, which had attained pre-eminence, even in a locality universally execrated)—was assembled a party so ill-assorted, that the most careless beholder would have involuntarily inquired by what strange chance the different individuals were thus thrown together. The whole were poor, dejected, even suffering ; yet at a glance you could single out the oppressor from the victim : the most careless ear might distinguish betwixt the complainings of grief checked by holy resignation, and the ejaculations of despair which at times broke the otherwise painful silence. The room was tolerably neat, more so than could have been expected ; there was even an attempt at taste ; a few gaudily-coloured prints were pinned against the wall, and a sprig or two of mint stuck in a broken teapot endeavoured to struggle into vitality, in defiance of the clouds of "blacks" which covered their leaves and obscured the insecure ledge from which they vainly wooed a straggling sunbeam, if one were ever found to

penetrate this inhabited cavern, for such it might be justly styled. On either side of the grate (where, notwithstanding the intense heat, burned a small fire) lounged two females, evidently mother and daughter, from the strong resemblance, not in features alone, but in form, action, the very mode of expression. The fierce dark eyes of each told the same tale of fearful passion; the iron hand of intemperance had left its mark on the flushed cheeks both of her whose life should yet be in its prime, and of the crone, as hideous as a vice-stained old age could render the human countenance. Though none, as we have said, would ever doubt the relationship that existed between the pair, yet in their outward bearing there was one striking difference;—as she cowered over the fire, the old woman's furtive glances betrayed the habitual craftiness of her soul; whilst her daughter, with head erect, crossed arms, and feet stretched out on the broken fender, seemed as if, in scorn of her own moral degradation, she waged war with a world to which perhaps in the first instance she was indebted for that very abasement, the shame though not the punishment of which she had outlived.

To her parents Martha owed but little; her father, one of a gang of "smashers," or passers of counterfeit coin, had been transported whilst she was yet a child; and over the means to which her mother had resorted for a livelihood we must draw a veil. Suffice it to say, that an incredible number of young, friendless, and inexperienced girls owed a life of evil, and death sharpened by all the pangs of remorse, to the "respectable matron who met them in the Grove,

and so kindly procured them a lodging when they, poor things, were quite strangers, and knew not to whom to apply."

"So you seem to have failed in both your precious bargains, mother," said the woman yawning, and drawing her tall figure to its full height. "The old fool does nothing but blubber about his cat and his wife; besides, if he's really ill, I don't want him to die here; and as to *her* (couldn't I make her stare, though?),—but, take my word, you'll do nothing with her, as sure as my name's Martha Warden."

"That's the worst of those plaguy Cath'lics," muttered the crone. "I've had a few Irish gals here in my time; and though they were as bad as bad could be at *first*, somehow or other they all began to wince and grow mumpish; and if they didn't keep to drink, they were sure to prate about repenting; and when they took ill, there was such a bawling for a priest,—we were obliged to send for one once, and of course that wasn't convenient."

"I should think not," said Martha, with a loud sickening laugh. "I remember I cut off; but what did he say to *you*?"

"More than I like to think about, I can tell you. You know you've heard me say my grandmother was a Cath'lic, and had me christened on the sly at one of the chapels; so I can't call myself a Protestant, you know."

"And me; what am I, pray?"

"Oh, you were never christened at all; your father wouldn't hear of it; he never took much to religion, poor man."

"Well, it doesn't much matter what we call our-

selves, eh, mother? The devil's sure to have us at last; so you and I may make ourselves quite easy about that. I have often wondered, though, what a church is like. And *she* reminds me of what the other *was*, when she mumbles so many words; and gives herself so much trouble with her prayers. You'll be wiser if you let her go; for if there is such a thing as conscience, I feel it whilst she's here."

"Fiddlesticks' ends! I should manage her well enough, if that cracked idiot was gone or dead. I'm sorry I ever brought *him* here, at any rate; but he looked so simple, I thought he'd make a good decoy-duck. I wish I'd left him to rot where I found him. See how pretty she is—she's quite a catch. Now, Martha dear, why don't *you* talk to her?"

"Don't *dear* me," said the woman fiercely; "I'll not do your dirty work; not that I care for *her*, but I feel sure, somehow, we'll be sorry for this—at least *I* shall. If it hadn't been for Ned, that scamp of a husband of hers might have got off."

"Got off? Why, he was transported before she left the infirmary; besides, he's got another wife, and that's why the girl's ashamed to show herself amongst her own people; they think a good deal of anything of the kind. But she went out as merry as a grig yesterday evening when I asked her to take a little walk;—and where did she get that tea, and those oranges she gave Jim?"

"She *did* go out, and if you were not blind, mother, you'd see she's quite altered like; she fancies Jim's dying, but there's plenty of stuff in him for a while; and you watch my lady, how she's tidied the room and

made everything neat about the old rogue, and how she's been mauling those beads in her fingers all the morning, and how fidgety she looked when you took a pull at the gin-bottle just now. There's something up, you see if there isn't."

Though apparently struck by her daughter's observations, Mrs. Buckland made no reply, but turning round, glared for a few moments on those who had called them forth.

On a few shavings in the corner was crouched the emaciated form of a human being ; he had no covering save his own ragged attire ; his head was supported by the old baskets which had formerly contained poor Norry's stock in trade, the sufferer being in fact no other than the bereaved Jim, though, in addition to his former afflictions, it was sufficiently evident the little intellect he had ever possessed was impaired from the grief occasioned by his wife's death, and the subsequent ill-treatment he had received at the hands of his landlady. Restless and unquiet, his mutterings were continual, though he did not seem to recognise the persons of those by whom he was surrounded.

"Sure an' it's a purty way to keep her word ; didn't she promise Norry to see to me ? An' it's not what I'd have expicted at her hands, that's the truth iv't. An' the boys, the spalpeens ! stalin' the onions, and no one to make me the warm dhrink. I'd betther have bided where I was, for it's not here I'm like to face the clargy, that's sartain too. Well, to be sure, I thought there was a face I knew ; an' so it's no one but Mother Buckland and her daughter, an' it's not wastin' the breath on the likes on 'em I'd be ;" and with inaudible

ejaculations, intended apparently for his own private benefit, Jim Casey curled himself closer together, as though to exclude objects by no means pleasant.

But there was still another occupant of the narrow chamber, and one in whom I hope my readers still retain an interest. Seated on the foot of Casey's most uninviting couch, her knees drawn up, her neck so stooped as to allow her forehead to rest on them, was the attenuated figure of Kate Gearey. Alas! how altered! Her curls, still long and brilliant, escaped in their wild profusion from her soiled and tumbled cap; the tattered gown, which, though shrunk from continued washing, was yet too large for the meagre frame it covered, told a tale, not of poverty alone, but of that heart-sickness which could render one so young totally indifferent to any remains of a beauty she had once so innocently cherished; the little hand, now shrivelled and yellow, tenaciously grasped the beads of which Martha Warden had spoken; not the silver ones she had brought from home—those were gone for ever (now scarcely missed),—but a common pair of black wood, that fortunately tempted no one's cupidity. There was a species of fascination in the old woman's fixed gaze, which disturbed her from the half-doze into which she had sunk. She raised her head, and then might be detected the slow but sure inroads of the disease which was apparently hurrying her to the grave; the large blue eyes appeared distended to double their natural size, the features were pinched and sharpened, whilst the course of the blood could be distinctly traced beneath the ashy skin. At that moment Kattie's countenance was decidedly not adapted to attract admiration from any,

much less the class amongst whom her lot appeared cast. Her exhausted sickly look excited the momentary commiseration of even the selfish Martha. After struggling for a brief space with a sense of shame at what she styled her own "chicken-heartedness," she exclaimed in an unusually husky tone—

"The girl's half dead from want of sleep; with that old file; here, mother, give her a drop of your comfort; I know it will go to your heart, but you may as well do a good action, if only for the novelty of the thing."

Kate shook her head, refusing Martha's offer with a look of such inexpressible disgust, that the latter, feeling much offended, settled herself again by the fire, whilst her more politic parent uttered in as soothing a voice as she could possibly assume—

"Why, child, what's the use of moping in this here way? bygones are bygones, isn't they? and since it can't be worse, if I was young and pretty like you, I'd make it better."

"It nd niver be betther, Missis Buckland, an' how would it?" said Kattie, the bright delusive colour which mounted to her cheek restoring for the time more than her former loveliness; "it 'll niver be betther, I tell you; it isn't my own disgrace, an' that I could niver look me peeple in the face agin, but that Florry's thransported, as I've heerde, an' what 'll become of him, the craythur?"

"But, dearey, that needn't prevent your riding in your coach, and wearing your silks and satins; no one will ever look at you again as you are, and when Florry comes back, there's his own real wife: besides, if you

don't pay me something for your board, you must troop at once ; I can get plenty on such terms."

"Kate *has* money, mother," said Mrs. Warden, significantly ; " she only wants to make herself out better than she is ; she didn't get those things for that lazy idiot for nothing. Ask her where she was last night ?"

" I'll tell you, an' welkim," said the poor girl, with all her former simplicity. " You ttempted me a sight at first, Missis Buckland, an' I thought I'd be revinged on meeself an' Florry if iver he'd kum to hear iv't ; an' the divil didn't let you want for words, an' me for thoughts ; they came all at once in my heart, an' I began to think I'd have plinty to ate an' dhrink, an' a fine gound like Martha's, an' as I'd got married in the Pradestant church, praps I'd better keep to them for a time. But somehow or other I couldn't make up me mind ayther ; an' whin I said my prayers, I couldn't sleep, an' I thought to stale away wid meeself. But whin you brought Jim here, an' I remimbered poor ould Norry (God rest her sowl, an' all o' thim !), my heart opened to the craythur, an' he dying in such a divil's den too, widout the praste ; an' I minded my own death, for I think it's not far off it is ; an' I saw Jim famishing wid the drought ; an' though it's not sinsible he is, an' doesn't know *me*, there are some he'd know in a minute. But didn't I ask you for the laves of the tay to moisten his mouth yisterday ? an' didn't you laugh an' throw them into the ashes ? Now, sure, wasn't it yerself druv me to it ?"

"Drove you to what, hussy ?" exclaimed the old woman, as a leer of indescribable satisfaction puckered her thin lips, increasing, if possible, her natural ugliness.

"An' it was I that took courage, an' called on a frind an' got a shillin' for Jim; an' thin as I was coming back I turned into the chapel, an' knelt down all alone, an' cried a dale too, whin I thought of my thrubbles, an' Fermoy, an' Father Phelim, an'—"

"Who cares a fig for your thoughts? You'll not stir out again in a hurry, so make yourself easy, my girl," exclaimed the enraged Mrs. Buckland, whilst her somewhat softened daughter made no reply.

"I knelt, an' cried, and prayed," continued Kate, not heeding the interruption; "an' I minded it was all my own fault for neglecting the dooty, an' one way or other I thought I'd spake to the praste, an' not let Jim here die like a dog; so I catcht houl't of the clargy as he was goin' to the box, an' as luck ud have it, who should it be but the same as prepared Norry? so himself promised he'd see to him this blessed day, an' thin I up an' tould him a word of my own, an' he's to see afther me too whin I go to him again, an' praps I'll be happy an' forgit Florry, an' git a sarvice afther all."

"A service, indeed! who'd take you from a place like this? why its very name's enough to frighten any one," exclaimed Mrs. Warden wildly; and rising as she spoke, she paced to and fro; then stopping short, continued in a broken tone, regardless of her mother's warning glances, "Attend to me, Kate; don't you go and listen to *her*, she's no more feeling than a stone, unless it's for the gin-bottle, she's pretty constant to that; she calls herself a Cath'lic, but her religion's much of a muchness with my own, and that's saying little enough for her; she'd sell every one of us for sixpence, or less if it suited her purpose; now, if

you wouldn't be made as bad as I am, get away from here as fast as you can."

"Martha!" screamed Mrs. Buckland; then continued in a whining tone, "Surely, my child——"

"Silence," said the woman bitterly; "don't you think I've lost my pluck. Perhaps what I'm going to say, Kate, is more to spite her than to serve you; but if you're not a hypocrite such as she is—or I'd never have been what I am,—a whining canting hypocrite, I say again, get away from here to-night, sleep anywhere, in the streets—the station-house—break a window, and they'll put you there; but for the sake of that God whom you have not yet offended, go from this——"

"Martha," repeated her enraged mother, for Kate was too bewildered to reply, "what humbug you're going on with! you know you're only gammoning her, and making yourself out worse than you are;—don't mind her, child."

"Yes, I'm a respectable married woman now, and she's safe enough too as long as I'm at home; but *then*"—a significant whistle terminated this speech, as Mrs. Warden, deliberately walking to a cupboard by the side of the fireplace, applied to her lips the neck of a black bottle, which having replaced, she more quietly continued, "Now, Kate, I'll tell you *who I am*; but don't you go on piping and squalling, or maybe it will change my humour, and then——"

"I'll cut your throat if you dare do any such thing, you slut; do you mean to bring us all to the gallows?" and seizing a broken knife which lay conveniently near, Mrs. Buckland aimed a blow at her daughter.

The latter contemptuously wrenched it from her feeble grasp, threw it behind the fire, exclaiming as she did so, in a slow hissing tone,

"Mother, you know me; I'll be heard, let who will hang for it." There was a strange lustre in her dark eye more expressive than words; and as the old woman sullenly resigned herself to her fate, she resumed, in a half-solemn, half-mocking manner,

"Kate, do you remember Ned Pratt?"

The effect of the name was electric; the girl started to her feet with a cry which, though low, was so bitter, so mournful, that Martha felt her eyes slightly suffused.

"Och!" she exclaimed, clasping her hands, "isn't it I that has reason to know him too; didn't he break my heart and kill me outright? didn't he make a robber of Florry? Ah! wasn't it a sorry day when he darkened our doores! For mercy, don't be after namin' him, or it's wild outright I'll be."

"You must listen, or you'll be wise if you get from here alive; and don't *you* speak," she continued, holding up her finger in a menacing way at Mrs. Buckland. "I'm bad enough now, but I suppose I might have been better if *both* my parents had been transported; don't think I'm going to repent, it's too late in the day for that. I never remember one that wasn't worse than myself, except *her*, and—I must say it—*yourself*, Kattie. I have puzzled lately to find out how this was, and I think it must be that as you were both Cath'lics, you both went to confession, and then you couldn't go far wrong, you know; because, I marked, I could do nothing with *her* until I made her give it up, though go to church she never would." Not under-

standing this incoherent speech, Kate, whom fear had effectually stilled, made no reply, whilst the excited woman continued, "I was very young when I made Pratt leave his wife and come and live with me; it was even more my fault, or rather my mother's, than his; for he was fond of Winny, and always pined after the children. I wasn't altogether depraved *then* (perhaps I am not now, at least compared to others), for I was fond of him, and I let him bring little Mary home, because I thought it would quiet him, and he'd not think so much about his wife. But oh! I couldn't bear it; the child was so good, so pretty, so innocent, so different from anything I'd ever seen, I did not wonder her father loved her, and it drove me mad to see it; I was like a devil watching an angel, all envy; when she knelt by her little bed and prayed, I longed *to kill her*, perhaps I should have done so but for him. I burned her books, beat, and starved her; struck Ned if he interfered, and at last hated him too. Still it might have ended there had I not had a *mother*; my heart was hard enough without her prompting, but even *I* started when she whispered to give the girl to her, and she would soon make her worse than myself. Still I thought of her words; and as I had determined to leave Pratt and marry a prize-fighter, who offered to make an honest woman of me, I couldn't bear the thoughts of his going back to Winny, and I knew if anything happened to Mary he need never show his face at home. As the devil would have it, he got a fever from drink, and whilst he was in the hospital I treated the girl worse than ever. My mother, pretending to pity her, took her home. You have

heard the rest; it's too bad even for me to tell. Yet I was punished; the man I married robbed me, treated me worse than I did *her*, was transported, and I returned here to ——"

"But what became of her? an' where 'll I find her?" inquired Kate, eagerly. "I mind the moan poor Winny used to be afther making for her, an' it's for yerself I'll be prayin' yet, Martha, an' blessin' ye too."

"Spare your prayers, girl, they're useless to me; if there's a hell, I've deserved it; if there's a heaven, I shall never see it. But for Mary, she's *here* in this very house; a house, mark me, where none ever prospered, where I alone protect you, and which you cannot, *shall not* leave unless with her."

"An' what 'll I do wid her? sure an' I'd be quite agreeable; it's nothin' I've got for myself, but I'll share that same wid her, an' welkim."

"I have no money, not a coin," said Martha, bitterly; "but these," she added, after a pause, disregarding the grimaces of the old woman, "are worth something, and they ought to be hers, as I stole them from her father." So saying, she placed in Kate's hand an old-fashioned pair of earrings, continuing in a hurried tone, "I'll see you both clear of the court, and then you must shift for yourselves; but hark! who is there?"

A low quick knock at the door occasioned the question, whilst Kate readily answered, "I suppose it's the clargy come to prepare Jim, an' it ud be a weight off me mind, for I'd be loath to have left the craythur, an' he greeting in that way." Martha advanced at

once towards the door, as if for the purpose of opening it; but before the girl was aware of her intention, turned the key, which chanced to be inside; when, having effectually secured herself from interruption, she seized Kate by the arm, and dragging her into a remote corner of the room, hoarsely whispered, "Now, Kate Gearey, if you but breathe one syllable of what I've told you to any living being until you're free of this house, there are those within call, and you know it, who'll put a gag into your mouth, and that of the officious meddler, be he priest or parson, who is fool enough to run his head into danger for the sake of such an old rickety piece of lumber as that;" and she pointed contemptuously towards Casey, who had given no signs of having understood a word of the preceding scene.

"I'll not spake at all, Martha dear; but don't hurt a hair of the clargy's head. Sure an' if you did, it's the curse ud be on you an' yours for ever; I'll say nothin' to vex you for——"

"I care not for myself; but though *she*," pointing to the trembling old woman, "deserves the rope, I'd rather not fasten it myself round her throat; some one else will do that soon enough, if she don't mind;" and with another of her forced laughs, she undid the fastening, and standing aside, allowed the intruder to enter. Mrs. Buckland and Martha breathed, however, more freely, when instead of the person they expected, they discovered the visitor to be a girl. Closing the door, she walked without hesitation to the side of Jim Casey's apology for a bed, and raising her veil, discovered features which, though pale, evinced neither

alarm nor disgust; in fact, her movements were marked by a self-possession which, notwithstanding her appearance and the richness of a dress and shawl (that under other circumstances might have tempted the cupidity of Martha and her amiable parent), betokened her not altogether unfamiliar to such scenes. Yet it must be confessed the heart of Josephine Bradshawe beat somewhat hurriedly in her bosom; and despite her outward bearing, it needed all the charity which had prompted her to place herself in her present perilous position in order to uphold her rapidly sinking courage. Before addressing the seemingly inanimate object at her feet, she glanced around, and was reassured on observing the younger and bolder-looking of the two women hang her head, writhing as it were beneath her stedfast gaze. Martha Warden, by one of those unaccountable freaks of the human heart, so impervious to shame that she would without a blush have trumpeted forth her misdeeds in a police-court, glorying in the very brand which separated her from her kind, now shrank humbled and abashed before one of her own sex; although there was nothing of rebuke in that calm, almost sorrowful face, without the interchange of a single word, each understood their relative position: vice yielded an involuntary homage to virtue.

"I fear he is not sensible?" exclaimed Miss Bradshawe, breaking a silence she herself felt irksome. Her question was answered by a loud joyous exclamation, and in another moment Kate Gearey, laughing, crying, uttering disjointed sentences in Irish, was cowering at her feet. Her appearance seemed both to surprise and shock Josephine, and the reproachful "Kate!" which burst from her lips, whilst it chilled

the very heart of the girl, did not escape the quick ear of Martha. As, confused and humbled, the former drew back, the woman whispered in her ear, with more kindness than she had ever been known to assume, "Bear it now, Kattie, for poor Mary's sake."

"Casey," exclaimed Miss Bradshawe, kneeling by his side and taking his hand, "do you not know me? Father Morgan has sent me to see you; why did you go away without mentioning it to us?"

"Know you, miss? av coorse I do;" and the sufferer, turning with difficulty, fixed his lack-lustre eyes on her face. "An' isn't it the voice I heer'd when my poor Norry died, an' meesilf was left in the world wid no one to comfort me barrin' the cat; an' how can I look you in the face now?" Here a violent gush of tears impeded the utterance of the unfortunate man.

"Shall we leave the room, madam?" inquired Martha, respectfully, though with a glance towards Kate, as if to intimate she too must form one of the retiring party. "I would much prefer *your* remaining;" the tone in which these few words were uttered completed Josephine's triumph over the strange wild being, who would now have hazarded her very existence rather than have allowed the most trifling insult to be offered to one who she felt confided in her protection.

"Miss Bradshawe," interrupted Jim, in a querulous tone, "may the heavens be your bed for this! yer a glorious craythur, an' the slave o' the world; but I promise you I'll niver let on to any, livin' or dead ayther, that you came to look afther me in this divil's den."

"Do not think of me, Casey, but tell me at once why you left the Buildings?"

"Thin, miss, I was owld, an' afther Norry died (it's not so long ayther) I became lonesome; I'd no one to do for me, an' *she* picked me up, an' tould me a lie, that she kem from my parts, and she niver in Ireland, good or bad; however, she put her '*comether*' on me, an' brought me an' the stall home. I was a dirty owld man, bekase of missin' Norry; an' not havin' the hands, I was cowl'd an' hungry; an', giv the divil his due, she clanded me and warmed me, an' gave me the cup o' hot tay, an' thin I was sent out to look for lodgers; but glory be to *His* name, I tuk to the bed whin I found out what they were afther, an' I think it's in a dhrame I've been iver since."

"But you must leave here, Casey; you are very ill, perhaps dying; and you surely would not wish Father Morgan to find you in this place?"

"Indeed, an' I'd shake at the sight of his riverince (God bless him!) like a dog in a wet sack; but does he know anything about it?"

"He does, or I should not be here; they told him you were senseless, so I thought that perhaps you might recollect me on account of your poor wife."

"An' that's jist it, miss; an' God bless you, come an' see me an'——"

"No, I cannot, dare not, come again; I am only here now to tell you you must quit this house at once."

"An' where will I go? sure an' I darn't face the Buildins' now."

"You *must* go to the infirmary," said Miss Bradshawe, decidedly; "the chair will be here this afternoon; there is no alternative."

"Ah, miss, don't send me to the House; I'll niver die there in pace; what 'll I do for the tay?"

"The brothers of St. Vincent of Paul will supply you with tea; but if you persist in remaining here, none of us can visit you."

"He'll go, miss, he'll go," exclaimed Kate, eagerly, as she saw Josephine turn towards the door; then added,

"God help us, it's not any av us has a likin' to the House; but the poor have no choice."

"Poverty is preferable to sin," said Miss Bradshawe, sternly; "surely you yourself do not intend to remain?"

"She does not, madam," exclaimed Martha, advancing as she spoke; "I will see her safe and harmless from this cursed house. Oh, if I were as she now is;—but it is folly talking of what can never be."

"Did not even the Magdalene repent?" asked Josephine, soothingly, holding out her hand as she spoke.

"Yes, madam, but Magdalene was a *Catholic*, whatever they may call her; I am no scholar, but I have heard of her;" and seizing Miss Bradshawe's hand, she pressed it to her lips, turning hastily away to conceal the tear which glistened in her large dark eye, the most precious she had ever shed. As Josephine descended the stairs, she was startled by observing the divers doors cautiously opened, and bold, reckless countenances hurriedly protruded, and as hurriedly withdrawn. There was, however one amongst the number, fair and young, which, though unheeded at the moment, haunted her imagination afterwards. Rapidly ascending the steps, she threaded her way

through the street, though she scarcely ventured to look around until fairly beyond the vicinity of the Grove.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BAPTISM.

THERE are few who do not remember Friday, September 7th, 1849; the intense heat, the lowering sunless sky, the perfect absence of wind, when even the most timid, as they watched the lurid clouds in the horizon, which marked the setting of the veiled monarch, wished for a thunderstorm "to clear the air." People that day traversed the streets with sinking hearts and disturbed countenances, for they knew the atmospheric pressure must fearfully augment a disorder they hoped had already reached its climax. But as the evening wore on, there arose a thick mist, obscuring the brilliancy of the gas-lamps, and causing the more cautious to hurry homewards, closing door and window to exclude the terror-inspiring visitant, who, however, more especially in the proximity of the river, would force his way into the very dwelling-houses, increasing the panic already prevailing to an unusual degree in a city the inhabitants of which, to use a common expression, "are not easily frightened." The recent and fearfully sudden death of more than one eminent medical man had proved how the destroying angel laughed to scorn all that skill could do to arrest his progress. Yet there was one, and that no inconsiderable, portion of the

population of London, who, in defiance of precautionary measures, seemed to have forgotten the risk they ran by inhaling the poisonous vapour, in some pursuit of paramount importance. Although waxing late, the doors of the various Catholic places of worship in the metropolis stood invitingly open, from the stately cathedral-like edifice to the humble building which could scarcely be called a chapel; and although there was no public function going on, persons of every rank, sex, and age passed continually in and out, to the amusement, astonishment, and oftentimes contempt of the loiterers.

In one of the prettiest of the West-end churches the scene was to the thinking mind unusually interesting, and could not fail to impress even those who differed from them in religious opinions with a sense of the strong devotional feeling that thus induced individuals of every class to disregard exposure to the night air, then considered so fatal, rather than fail to do honour to the great festival of which it was the vigil. The building alluded to was in the Grecian style, erected many years ago, large and irregular, having been added to gradually, as the spiritual wants of an increasing congregation demanded greater space. At the time of which I write, though not anything like what it now is, it gloried in a spacious sanctuary, and such ample accommodation for its poorer members as few churches of even twice its size could boast; in fact, a fair half of the edifice was appropriated to their use; and as that portion contained three of the confessionals, it was now brilliantly illumined and densely crowded, leaving what was generally distinguished as "the old chapel" (the farther aisle excepted) in shadow. That

sisle was not, however, untenanted ; a very large proportion of the congregation lingered near a thick crimson curtain, anxiously waiting their turn to prepare for the morrow, the feast of the Nativity of Our Blessed Lady, when none of her children would willingly allow their morning salutation to proceed from a heart defiled by sin. Nor was the nave itself deserted ; many who had just quitted, or were preparing to approach, the tribunal of penance, knelt in softened and uncertain light, sufficiently subdued to render visible the rich tint of the crimson lamp suspended before the high altar. It was the banner proclaiming that there the Holy of holies deigned to dwell, not proudly floating as the national standard above the palace-arch of earthly potentates, but gently gleaming, whispering comfort, hope, and love to the bruised hearts who left their woes at the tabernacle's foot, and departed with a peace surpassing that of earth.

The hours passed by ; one by one the worshippers had disappeared, until not more than half a dozen lingered in that spacious and now lonely pile ; yet by the sanctuary rails, in the very centre of the altar, just in the halo formed by the ruby beams of light, knelt motionless and abstracted a slight female figure ; her hands were tightly compressed, her head bent forward, and but for the tears which fell thick and fast down her pale cheeks, she might have been mistaken for one of the chiselled figures which adorn the niches of those old cathedrals, so dear and yet so saddening to every Catholic heart. It was not until one of the attendants touched her on the shoulder, informing her that they were about to close the church,

that she arose, and drawing her veil closely around her agonized countenance, proceeded with a firm though swift step towards Grosvenor Square ; even during her short and rapid walk her lips continued to move, and as she approached the house which was to terminate her journey, her whole frame shook so violently as to render her gentle knock tremulous, in fact scarcely audible. It was, however, instantaneously answered ; and as Josephine cast a quick inquiring glance at the scared domestics who were congregated in the hall of Lord Lindore's usually quiet and well-ordered mansion, it was evident she was avoided by the most timid, as though there was some fearful contamination in her proximity.

"I am so glad you are returned, madam," exclaimed the porter, with tears in his eyes ; he was a grey-haired man, had grown old in the family's service, remembered the birth of Josephine's mother, and was therefore fondly attached to her child. "I am so glad you are returned ; Dr. Sumners has sent down to inquire after you two or three times ; perhaps you will go to him at once?"

"But Lady Lindore ? My uncle ?"

"They have locked the doors of my lady's apartments, as her screams only disturbed Lady Angela ; Pauline has been taken to bed ill ; my lord is in the library, and has asked for you repeatedly, though it would be better you should see Dr. Sumners first."

Consigning her cloak and bonnet to the care of one of the housemaids who chanced to be passing (and who appeared to receive the deposit rather unwillingly, throwing it from her the moment Miss Bradshawe was

out of sight), the latter rapidly ascended the deserted staircase. As she passed the countess's apartments, she could distinctly hear the repeated and violent sobs of the fond, weak mother, mingled with a confused sound of voices ; but she did not pause until she reached the door of Angela's boudoir, which was divided from her bedchamber by a dressing-room, now abandoned by its presiding priestess, the alarmed Pauline. A sickening sensation stole over Josephine, as she feebly grasped the handle ; nor had she recovered herself sufficiently to conceal her anxiety until she stood in the presence of Dr. Sumners and two other physicians who had been called in. They were the first in the profession, of undoubted skill and deserved reputation, yet their countenances were perturbed ; they were evidently divided between themselves ; and as each held a separate theory regarding the disease in question, it was probable the patient would derive little benefit from the consultation. Dr. Sumners himself was rapidly pacing the apartment, and turning hastily round, addressed Miss Bradshawe in a voice hoarse with emotion—

“It is really too bad, child ; where can you have been ? in a house, too, where every one seems to have taken leave of their senses. You're not afraid of the cholera, I suppose ?”

“Afraid ? no. But surely, Dr. Sumners—Angela ?—it appeared but a slight attack ?”

“Slight, eh ? What do *you* think, Melton ?” and an enormous pinch of snuff was imbibed as an apology for the tears which suffused the eyes of the abrupt though kind-hearted old man.

"Really can't hazard an opinion, doctor," answered the person addressed, a tall, thin, mild-spoken individual, who owed his present attendance more to the patronage of Lady Lindore than from any opinion entertained by his companions of his ability. "Would be exceedingly presumptuous to do so. Life is uncertain—very." And he gazed intently at his watch, an invariable custom whenever he felt himself puzzled by being called upon for a decisive answer. "Yet, if I might venture—case of collapse—painful position—sympathise with the countess—very precarious—yet hope for—"

"Not a bit of it," interrupted a rough elderly man, one of the oracles of his profession; "not a shadow of a chance—can't live six hours—no use deceiving you."

"But this drowsiness, Sir Edward? it has been regarded as a favourable symptom."

"Too far gone, I tell you, Dr. Sumners; the child will sink in it; not much more to suffer though, if you don't disturb her; but *hope*! Psha! sir, I tell you there's none."

"Well, then, Josephine," said Dr. Sumners, testily, "I must trust you; never was in such a confounded house in my life—women frightened to death."

Not caring to remind the vexed old man that he ought to be pretty well conversant with a house the inmates of which he had attended for twenty years, Miss Bradshawe, who knew his ways, remained in an attitude of fixed attention; and, after a pause, he continued—

"Sent for a nurse—makes Angela restless—you must go and sit by her; you're used to it, I know, my

dear, and are not quite so full of affectation as the rest of them. Dr. Melton will attend the countess; for me, I shan't stir to-night, and my little pet in danger."

Dr. Melton, not feeling any particular relish for his present position, again pulled out his watch, as if to take it into his confidence; and with a bow to his colleagues, and another to Miss Bradshawe, hastily quitted the room, Lady Lindore having in the meanwhile worked herself into such a state of excitement as really to stand in need of his assistance.

"Melton is a contagionist," said Sir Edward Armstrong, sneeringly; then with an abrupt nod towards Josephine, looked inquiringly towards Dr. Sumners.

"Oh, she is fearless enough to take the situation of nurse at a cholera-hospital, if she was wanted, and knows pretty well what she's about too. Your cousin is tranquil now; the longer she remains so the better; should the spasms return, send for me directly."

With a look of relief, which seemed to Dr. Sumners rather ill-timed, Miss Bradshawe proceeded into the sick-room; and he exclaimed, as she closed the door behind her—

"There's certainly something odd about that girl; one would think she was going to a wedding instead of running herself into danger; she never seems to fear death; it's very strange."

"She is not simple enough to believe in contagion," said Sir Edward, approvingly. "Good-night, Dr. Sumners; I have yet to complete my rounds."

"Then you really entertain no hopes?" inquired his colleague, anxiously.

"None whatever;"—after a cordial grasp of the hand, the great man departed; and the doctor, settling himself in an easy-chair, soon yielded to the fatigue engendered by a long and anxious watch,—all the more readily as he knew himself to be within call.

As Josephine passed through the dressing-room, everything reminded her of Angela; the flowers she had placed there were still fresh and beautiful; the bouquet she had worn, the pearls which had encircled her neck, the very dress in which, not twelve hours before, she had been the admired of all beholders, were scattered about in every direction, proving the suddenness of the attack, and the consequent confusion which had prevailed. A pang pierced her heart as she thought of her uncle, and what he must suffer at the prospect of losing his darling in the very flower of her age, the zenith of her loveliness; she longed to fly to his side, to whisper words of consolation into his ear; but no! it must not be, the opportunity she had so ardently prayed for was hers, by a most blessed unexpected chance; the soul of Angela might yet, through her instrumentality, be saved.

She pressed rapidly forward; after a few whispered words with the nurse, who was seated near the open window, the latter gladly withdrew into the dressing room, and Miss Bradshawe fearlessly approached the bed. Gently withdrawing the muslin curtains, she gazed anxiously and wistfully on that young still face,—so still, so motionless, that but for her experience in similar cases she would have imagined the spirit had already passed away. Never, in the hours of triumphant mirth or youthful folly, had Angela

Malvern appeared so lovely, as, by the subdued light of the screened lamp, she lay extended in the deep stupor of exhaustion. Her dark locks unbound, dishevelled by the violence of her paroxysms, had strayed in rich profusion over the snowy pillow, rendering the bloodless cheek more marble-like by the force of contrast; but as Josephine tenderly removed the glossy tresses from the brow of the beautiful girl, she shudderingly observed the blue tinge on the lips and the darkened hue of the nails of the little hand, which felt so cold and clammy in her own feverish grasp; the pulse too, its beatings scarcely responded to her eager pressure. Her worst fears were verified; she knew that ere the dawn of the next day there would be mourning in Lord Lindore's house, sorrow round his hearth, and his favourite child would be numbered with those who had been. Yet she did not despair; long and fervently had she petitioned for the preservation of that soul so pure, so innocent, that soul into which she herself had instilled the first seeds of Catholicity; and she felt that her petition would not be denied, for that there was One in heaven who prayed with and for her. Still, no language can do justice to the intense anxiety with which she watched each faint breath from those closed lips,—no faint, she trembled lest each should be the last,—nor the almost rapturous feeling which took possession of her heart, when the girl unclosing her heavy eyes, fixed them on her face and faintly murmured "Josephine!" To throw herself on her knees, so as to bring her head on a level with that of the sufferer, and gently inquire what she could do for her, was the work of a moment; and when by signs Angela gave her to understand the

burning thirst which consumed her, that experience which had so often formed the jest of happier hours stood her in good stead. Hastily selecting an effervescing draught from amongst the refreshments with which a small table was covered, she raised the drooping head on her arm, and without assistance, though scarcely equal to the dead weight, held the glass to her lips. It evidently refreshed the sufferer much, for she did not relinquish it until the last drop was drained; then sinking back on the pillow, feebly articulated, as though in answer to her cousin's hopeful glance,

"Josephine, do not deceive yourself, I am dying."

"My sweet Angela,"—but it was in vain; Miss Bradshawe's firmness completely deserted her; forgetful of all she had to say, the important duty she had to perform, she buried her face in the coverlet and sobbed aloud; her fair hair mingling with the auburn curls, and her warm breath playing on the cold cheek of the sufferer, to whom it seemed to impart a momentary life. With an incredible effort Angela contrived to raise her hand, allowing it to fall heavily on the bent head of her cousin; this action effectually roused the latter, and with a hurry proportionable to the value of the few moments which might still remain, she exclaimed, "My own Angela! do you remember what we have so often spoken of, and ——"

"I know what you would say, Josephine. I remembered it all, when you thought me asleep. I did so wish for you—and then to find you here. But go to papa—be very gentle to him—tell him not to fret,—that—I must die,—and—I have never been properly baptized,

—it may displease him ; but say I *must* become a Catholic.”

Not waiting a second bidding, Miss Bradshawe summoned the nurse, and without passing through the suite of rooms by which she had entered, gained the landing by a door communicating directly with the sleeping-apartment, and with the speed of an arrow flew down the staircase, crossed the spacious hall, and entering the library, pale, breathless, and agitated, her dress and hair disordered from the recent embrace of his daughter, stood before her uncle.

“ Good God, Josephine ! O Norville, my child is dead ! ” and he turned towards his companion, whom at first she had not perceived, and even then did not regard.

“ Not dead, not *yet* dead ; ” and she clung to him weeping, trembling, unable to support herself. The earl was moved ; softened by his own grief, he passed his arm round her, and pressing her closely to his heart, inquired as he did so, “ Yet, my Josephine, surely there is hope ? ”

Here was another of Josephine’s late so frequent trials. For six long years had the barrier remained between them, a barrier placed there by one she had loved with more than a child’s affection ; and now, when forgetting pride and prejudice, he himself had removed it, to be obliged to re-erect it with more than adamantine firmness. Still there was no time for hesitation ; raising her eyes timidly to his face, she exclaimed, “ I fear not. Angela herself bade me tell you she was dying, and —— ”

“ Dying, and I loiter here ! My child ! my darling !

so suddenly too. Where is Dr. Sumners? has not Sir Edward Armstrong been sent for?"

"Everything has been attended to, dearest uncle; and Angela herself, convinced that nothing can be done for her young life, bids me implore you not now to deny her wherewith to save her soul."

"Her soul? What mummery is this, Josephine?" and he released his hold so suddenly, that Miss Bradshawe must have fallen but for the heavy frame of a carved screen, against which she tottered. "You have not been disturbing her mind with your fanatical notions, or torturing her weakened imagination with the absurd chimeras of your idolatrous creed?"

"There is no time for discussion, Lord Lindore," said his niece firmly. "Angela is dying; her hours, her very moments are numbered; long convinced of the truths of the Catholic religion, she eagerly desires to embrace it. Can you, will you refuse her?"

"What, allow a Popish priest, an emissary of Rome, to enter my house? to stand deliberately by and permit the spiritual perversion of my child? to see that innocent mind torn *now* by contending doubts? to allow the fluctuations, the weakness of disease to be played upon, tortured? And for what? to have it bruited abroad that the Lady Angela Malvern, the only daughter of the zealous *anti-Papistical* Earl of Lindore, was received into the bosom of the Catholic Church."

There was a passion in her uncle's tone, a wildness in his eye, that made Miss Bradshawe tremble for his reason; but when she thought of the dying Angela, her uncertain baptism, and how she now probably wondered at her protracted absence, her excitement

became so great that, darting forward, only intent on carrying her point, she threw herself at Lord Norville's feet, who remained an astonished though not an unmoved spectator of the scene, and bursting into an agony of tears, exclaimed; "Lord Norville! Edgar Wellborne! hear me; plead for me, for *her*; let him not thus peril the immortal soul of his innocent daughter by allowing her to appear before her Maker perhaps unbaptized. Let him drive me from his roof, from his presence for ever; I would suffer that, nay more, death itself, so he hearken *now*. Believe me, 'tis not the conversion of Lord Lindore's daughter, but the salvation of Angela Malvern which I seek."

"Nay, Josephine, be calm," said Lord Norville, in a broken voice, raising her from the ground, and endeavouring to place her in a chair. "Your cousin has been baptized, and you know it would be sacrilege to repeat the sacrament."

"But we cannot trust a Protestant baptism; has not even my uncle often remarked on the careless manner in which ministers administer this most sacred of rites, as if it were a mere ceremony, to be performed or omitted at pleasure? And was it not those very expressions which awakened the first doubt in Angela's mind?"

"And which," said Lord Lindore, "you so dishonourably improved, with an eye to the future aggrandizement of a Church of which you are so worthy a member."

"Nonsense, my lord! You are now, indeed, unjust," said Lord Norville, angrily, and nettled by this attack on Josephine. "What aggrandizement can a Church, as ancient, as firmly established as, to say the truth, the

Catholic really is, derive from the conversion of a dying girl scarce past her childhood? Think better of it, my dear friend, whatever your private opinions may or ought to be, by conceding to her request; you have it in your power to soothe the death-bed of your expiring darling; do you, dare you hesitate? Believe me, Lord Lindore, if you persist in this refusal, when Angela's place is vacant, when her smile no longer gladdens you, you will remember your present firmness only to your own misery; and should you ever become convinced of the truths of that creed you now despise, what will, what *must* be your remorse, your deep, undying remorse, at having refused?"

"*Should I ever become convinced?* Is it not enough to lose my child, without the added misery of her apostasy? And you, Edgar Wellborne, son of my oldest friend, it is not possible that you too can be a renegade?"

"I am no renegade; yet would I cheerfully, with your consent, summon a priest to your daughter's bed of death. You remember how ambiguous was Dr. Selwood's reply when you expressed a wish for him to visit her; he fears contagion."

Somewhat shaken by this address, the earl was about to answer, when a loud shriek in the direction of Lady Angela's room was followed by the sound of footsteps, as of persons hurrying to and fro; in another moment one of the housemaids, abruptly throwing open the door, exclaimed, "Oh, Miss Bradshawe! Oh, my lord! it's all over! Lady Angela's gone! Dr. Sumners told me to call you. But who'll face my lady? I'm sure I daren't."

"O my God, forgive me! forgive and strengthen me!" groaned the bereaved father, as, overpowered with agony and remorse, he endeavoured to stagger towards the door. Josephine, more active, was about to pass him, when turning back, as by a sudden revulsion of thought, she laid her hand on Lord Norville's arm, and hurriedly whispered—

"She is not, she cannot be dead; if you yourself would find mercy in your last hour, go for a priest."

"But where can I find one; and will he come at this unseasonable hour?"

"Will he come? go to Hill Street, and bring one of the priests from there; they will not hesitate a moment, and it is close at hand."

Had Lord Norville been so inclined, there was no time to remonstrate, and feeling that at such a moment it would be sinful to delay, he hastened to comply with Miss Bradshawe's request.

When Josephine had quitted her cousin's apartment, the nurse was the sole attendant on the suffering girl, and the silvery light of the single lamp had been so arranged, that not even a stray beam could reach the bed where she lay. On her return, she found it filled by such of the female domestics as had surmounted their dread of cholera; even Pauline, in her *robe de chambre*, had left her "couch" to say "von leetle adieu to her goot young lady;" whilst, to crown all, the countess herself was supported in a large arm-chair, weeping hysterically, and ever and anon muttering something concerning the danger of ices, which no one, Dr. Melton excepted, gave themselves the trouble to understand; but he, still watch in hand, felt it quite a

professional duty to give an affirmative answer to whatever she might advance, since her complaint was one likely to be augmented by contradiction. Now as each and all of the spectators, for such they may properly be called, had armed themselves with the nearest candle previous to answering the housemaid's warning scream, innumerable tapers flared in every direction, increasing the temperature in a fearful degree, and arousing the ire of the tortured Dr. Sumners, whose surly, "Take away those cursed lights!" was only obeyed by their being removed from one place to another. And where, during all this confusion, was the earl? crouching on the ground by the side of his expiring child. For, as Josephine had surmised, the awful change had not yet taken place; a deeper fit of exhaustion than usual had been mistaken by Mrs. Margaret for the event, on the strength of which she felt herself justified in alarming the household, becoming for the time quite a person of importance, "even," as she afterwards observed, "making that disagreeable Mr. Adams prick up his ears, though at other times he'd snub her for chattering like anything."

As Miss Bradshawe made her way through a throng whose principal occupation appeared to be impeding each other's movements, there was something in the scene which reminded her of one that, notwithstanding her then early age, had never faded away from her memory—her mother's death-bed; the half-raised form of the young Angela, the wan yet beautiful face shrouded by the long rich curls; her uncle's prostrate form, in both cases repenting when it was too late, completed the illusion, and something like indignant

reproach flashed from her eyes as they encountered his. The glance, by one of those invisible sympathies for which there is no accounting, recalled the same train of ideas to a mind already sufficiently tortured.

"Josephine! oh, forgive me! Angela, my darling! only speak to me once, once more;" and the proud earl literally grovelled on the earth, writhing like a worm in his agony, and regardless of the presence of his menials, groaned aloud.

"Papa! dear papa!" gasped the dying girl; "but where is Josephine?"

"Here, dearest," and her cousin twined her arms around her: "you are better?"

"No—did you ask him?—did you tell him?—he would not be angry with me now."

Lord Lindore bent his head, as he encountered the fixed upbraiding gaze of Josephine. Oh, that last half-hour! could all his wealth, his titles, his dearly-prized character for consistency, have won that one half-hour back again, they would have been willingly, thankfully given; how valueless was pride and the most cherished prejudice, when compared with the power of bestowing one last moment's happiness on his idolized child! Was it yet too late? he looked wistfully at Dr. Sumners; the latter shook his head, resorted to his snuff-box, glanced uneasily towards the mother, and allowed his eyes to rest on the face of Josephine, with an expression which she at least did not misunderstand. Quick as thought, she tenderly replaced her cousin's head upon the pile of cushions, flew to a table, and in a moment was again by her side, holding in her hand a goblet filled with water. Slightly elevating the pillow

with one hand, before any one was aware of her intention, she bathed the fair brow with the regenerating stream, pronouncing at the same time those conditional words which at least insured the reception of that first and most important sacrament. Though her uncle had watched her intently, he appeared to want either power or will to oppose her; even mechanically stretching out his hand for the empty glass, whilst Miss Bradshawe, with a sickening fear lest she might have been after all too late, bent with pallid countenance and strained ear to catch the faintest breath.

“ Papa!—Josephine—mamma!” was murmured so faintly that the voice did not reach the countess; her cousin felt the arm tighten round her neck, the weight grow heavier, the lips so near her own were cold and still; the graceful head fell back. Lady Angela Malvern was dead! Without a sign, a tear, a sound, did Miss Bradshawe gaze for one brief second on that calm sweet face, and then fatigue, sorrow, and anxiety did their work; she swayed unsteadily for a second, strove to gaze again, and sank fainting by her side. At that moment the door hurriedly opened, and Lord Norville entered the apartment, followed by a priest.

CHAPTER XV.

THE LODGING-HOUSE.

“ *The Lodging-house.*” To what different associations do these words give rise! To the expectant wife and blooming daughters who have as yet failed in

extorting from the too-prudent husband and father that *ne plus ultra* of female felicity, a well-appointed town mansion, they in "the merrie month of May" never fail to conjure up visions of apartments regally furnished, fashionably situated, first-rate attendance, and every other requisite, all for the exceedingly moderate rent of from twelve to sixteen guineas a week. To others they merely represent a quiet, respectable, private street, such as one meets in the neighbourhood of the squares, and where any given house may serve as a model for the whole row, with almost every other parlour-window exhibiting a neat embossed card intimating that here furnished apartments are to be let. In most cases these residences are parcelled out into floors, the mistress doing the cooking, the maid-of-all work waiting at table; and what with the exactions, caprices, and impertinences of their temporary occupants, both (poor things!) are equally to be pitied in their endeavours to make ends meet. But it is quite another class of lodging-house with which I have to do. The common lodging-house is a distinct specimen of its species, abounding more plentifully in this vast metropolis than is conducive to the morality and well-being of its poorer inhabitants; though of course even here there are different grades, some being considered, and really proving, more respectable and well conducted than others. Now as the identical establishment of which I am about to speak is a very fair type of its class, I shall at once introduce it to my readers, not only such as it was at the period of my tale, but such as it continues to the present day.

Not far from the Buildings, and close to A —

Court, though leading directly into one of the most fashionably frequented business-neighbourhoods in the West End, is a street without thoroughfare, tolerably wide, clean, well-paved, lighted, and for about two-thirds of its length composed of small, respectable-looking houses,—houses whose parlour-windows one sees decorated with a bright-green miniature paling, a five-barred gate in the centre, all looking so natural and rural, and a number of deep-red flower-pots within. The plants they contain might be better, to be sure ; but what of that ? they are very well for London. And then there is an egg or two resting on the upper pane, and the hens who laid the said eggs are pecking busily up and down, as though to warrant their being genuine new-laid ; and with so convincing a proof of their parentage close at hand, who so hardy as to doubt it ? Near the upper end of this street, it is intersected by two courts, the lower stories of one of which are almost entirely occupied by brokers, where old and inferior goods, under the invigorating influences of “French polish,” assume an appearance well calculated to make the unwary purchaser credit the solemn assurance of the dealer that “they are next to given away.” I have often marvelled, however, how the inhabitants of cellar and garret could endure the spirituous atmosphere, which positively takes away your breath as you enter the house where this spurious varnish is used ; in fact, it is so pungent as to overpower even the fumes of fried fish—another business carried on to some extent in the outhouses of this locality. The second passage—for it is too narrow to deserve any other name,—besides being appropriated to rag-pickers, bone-merchants, and

bottle-shops, trades not of the most cleanly description, contains a lodging-house ; and, indeed, the portion of the street above the courts is entirely composed of houses of this kind, the dead wall in which it terminates bearing the inscription, in letters of more than a foot in length, " Lodgings for single men." You must not suppose, however, but that persons of all descriptions find ready shelter here on payment of the threepence which is invariably demanded before the wanderer is allowed to stretch his weary limbs on a not over-inviting couch. As the interior of these buildings is comparatively deserted during the day, it is no unusual thing for the passers-by to be regaled with the sight of coverlets, blankets, and sheets suspended from the upper windows, airing in the sun, or in other words, ridding themselves of the filth engendered by one set of lodgers in order to be ready for the use of another ; and this is by a mere elementary process, perfectly independent of those refinements of modern luxury known by the name of soap and water. To the natural philosopher it might not be altogether uninteresting to watch the different characters who pass in and out,—or, more correctly speaking, the *same* persons in *different* characters. As we gaze admiringly on that wooden-legged specimen of a British tar, that blind fiddler from the land of cakes, and above all, the venerable man bending beneath the weight of years, we call to mind a certain nursery-tale of a mill wherein the old were ground young again ; for we could swear we saw that very trio enter the same door not half an hour ago sound in limb and in full possession of all their senses, the latter especially remarkable for his sturdy youthful appear-

ance : the fellow would realize a fortune on the stage, if only for his knack of "making up."

One of these houses must have seen better days. It is a large barrack-like edifice, dangerously out of the perpendicular, crazy with age, and so innocent of repair that the whole building cannot boast an entire window ; and for doors (save the mark !), some have been removed, sill and all ; others can boast a solitary panel, though in all cases affording a full and unimpeded view of the sleepers to such late comers as may chance to be ascending the dangerous and broken stair. This establishment, be it remarked, has a reputation for propriety, and consequently raises its head with a certain pharisaical display of superiority over its less virtuous neighbours. There are apartments for single men, others for single women ; the smaller rooms being appropriated to families who, on paying the week *in advance*, are allowed to take their meals on the premises, and for this purpose enjoy the use of a kitchen, where a fire is kept burning winter and summer at the expense of the landlord. The upper story has its advantages and disadvantages, the latter consisting chiefly of the almost total absence of roof, whereby the sleepers are occasionally treated with an unexpected and gratuitous shower-bath. This, of course, depending on the caprice of the climate, forms no part of the agreement ; for although the proprietors clear a rent about commensurate with that of a mansion in Cavendish Square, it is not their policy to expend a farthing on "an old tumble-down shell, which the district surveyors would be having about their ears some fine morning or other." To counterbalance this exposure to the weather, the back

windows look upon a really well-kept and beautiful garden, belonging to one of those old quaint palaces with which London still abounds ; though so jealously are they guarded by high dingy walls, that one is apt to associate them with something especially gloomy and disagreeable. The room which possessed this incalculable advantage was that assigned to single women ; and although its usual inmates were not in general very enthusiastic admirers of inanimate nature, that garden had proved a real blessing to one who for many a weary day, and still more weary night, had been chained by a lingering and acute disease to a bed from which she had once never expected to rise again.

In the internal arrangement of the chamber, or rather loft, there was nothing particularly inviting, the furniture consisting of some seven or eight bedsteads, rickety, worm-eaten, and so metamorphosed from their original designs, that their makers would have had some difficulty in recognising the offspring of their own ingenuity. There was the stately four-post, shorn of its fair proportions, amputated to a stump ; the remains of the elegant French bedstead daily dwindling from atrophy ; the half-tester, lamed by some unfortunate accident ; the tent, and other nameless varieties ; but all so mutilated, that the place rather suggested the idea of an hospital erected by some of the philanthropists of the day for the reception of invalided or decayed furniture, than the sleeping-apartment of human beings. It, however, possessed a peculiarity which must not be here passed over ; the rugs, blankets, in short every article of bedding, were stamped all over with the emphatic phrase, " Stop Thief ! " an expression with

which the trampers seemed perfectly conversant, inasmuch as it failed to elicit either surprise or displeasure. A small heap of oyster-shells near each door might cause the uninitiated to wonder at the untiring predilection for that rather expensive delicacy ; they would have marvelled still more, perhaps, when they learnt that these were the candlesticks of the establishment. Chairs or tables there were none ; and as the bedsteads before mentioned were chained to the floor, any unjust appropriation of the household furniture would have been (to say the least) difficult.

It was considerably past mid-day, the hour at which the nightly lodgers were *compelled* to turn out ; the room, therefore, with the exception above alluded to, was quite untenanted. And that exception ?—it was a girl ; fair, young, and once innocent, though now wasted by sickness and depressed by suffering. In the silence of that wide, dreary chamber she had no companionship but thoughts which, if one might judge by the tears standing in those large melancholy eyes, were sad enough. Yet there were evident marks that the child (she was little else in years) was not uncared for. A large pillow supported the drooping shoulders ; the sheets, clean though coarse, were evidently private property ; a neat quilled cap-border shaded the lily-like face ; and the bed she occupied was wheeled round, so that she could without exertion gaze on the garden,—that garden which for two long months had been to her a monitor, a confidant, nay even a friend. When a broken-hearted wanderer, Mary Pratt (for she it was) had been brought to that harbour of the harbourless by one as desolate as herself ; losing both memory and con-

sciousness during her first night's sojourn, how had she used her recovered faculties? To blame, nay revile the patient creature who begged and toiled only for her; for *her*, the child of the man who had assisted in the wringing of her own young heart; and oft, in the wildness of her wayward nature, would Mary with her tongue wish herself still in the abode of infamy from which she had been rescued, though her heart would smite her as she marked poor Kate's tearful eyes, and remembered how she had toiled and suffered for her sake. Then slowly and by degrees a change came over her spirit; too young to be quite hardened, she would gaze hour after hour on those fair flowers, until she deemed their unobtrusive loveliness had lured her wrung heart, first to a state of quiescent, then of hopeful resignation. It was no association of early, spotless youth (for she was London born), but as she saw their summer beauty perish neath the bleak winds of autumn, she thought of her own blighted life—of what she had been: she too must die—and at her first wish there came to her a minister of God's Church. He whispered gentle, soothing words, and in process of time she was reconciled to her offended Maker; then she only wished for life to spend it in His service, and her prayer was heard. Though still too weak to be moved, she rapidly mended; more rapidly, perhaps, because when Kate was absent, a kind friend might sometimes be seen by her side, cheering her and uttering sounds such as she had never heard before; for they were sounds of kindness, real heartfelt kindness, and Mary learnt to long for that light footstep, and to watch the hours until the lady came. On the present occasion, however, it was a

dull, drizzly November day, so she could scarce be expected; the girl tossed restlessly about, wondered and wondered again, until she wondered herself to sleep; and when she awoke, she found Kate Gearey already returned leaning on the foot of the bed.

"Why, Kattie, what brings you home so soon?" she inquired pettishly; "you said you'd not be back until evening."

"Did you dhrink all the tay an' ate the bit of cake I left you, Mary dear?" said the kind-hearted girl, evading the question, as she thought, most skilfully. But her companion, although younger, knew the world and the world's ways better than herself; and besides, circumstances had rendered her suspicious. She saw at a glance there was something Kate wished to conceal, and was determined to fathom the mystery.

"No, I didn't, I wasn't hungry, and the lady didn't come; but I suppose you went there, so you can tell me the reason."

"Oh, is it Miss Bradshawe you're maning? It's hersilf 'll be here presintly, and good news she has for the pair of us, dear. But whin I think of the craythur, oh!——"

"I'm sure you don't look much as if it was *good news* you had to tell; you're as white as your apron, and I'm certain you've been crying, Kate, so it's of no use telling a lie about it. Did the lady scold you?"

"Scould me, is it? Ah no; I've got what I wanthed, the good situation, at last,—av coorse, not till it's well you are, Mary, darlin'; an' it was lave Ellen gave me to come an' tell you all about it, whin,—whin who do you think I met?"

"How should I know?" exclaimed the sick girl, with increasing impatience; "you know how I hate your roundabout ways of telling a story, and yet you always do it."

"Well, thin—but don't let it scare you, darlin', *she'll* not kum near you,—it was Martha Warden."

"Martha Warden! Oh, don't let her see me, Kate! Didn't you promise Father Morgan you'd never speak to that *woman*, that monster, again? You don't know her as I do, you don't know half her wickedness! And, God forgive me! I often feel sorry my father didn't do for her outright when he came out of the hospital."

"Hush, Mary, dear; didn't Miss Bradshawe tell you revinge was a sin? An' sure if he'd kilt her outright he'd have been hanged; so it's not wishin' well to him you are."

"I feel I've been very wicked," said poor Mary, bursting into an agony of tears; "but if you knew what that wretch made me suffer! I was well brought up by my poor mother, and it couldn't have been a trifle that forced me to such evil courses, that I hate myself even now—and I only sixteen. But, Kate, did you speak to her? Did she say anything about me? You didn't surely tell her where I was?"

"She asked, but I didn't tell; though my heart couldn't but melt to the craythur, for it was in great thrubble she seemed. She was crying a dale (an' you know Martha hadn't the wather near her eyes for nothin'), an' she leaning over the bridge for'ninst the Park, so I couldn't help listenin' to her; and whin I turned away—it's of no use scouldin', Mary—I gave

her half the loaf I was bringin' to you, an' she clutched hould of it quite wild like, and said 'God bless you, girl! I didn't deserve it of you; tell *her*, praps she'll forgive me whin I'm *there*;' an' she pointed to the black-looking wathers, an' laughed 'till it made my blood cold, an' then gnawed the loaf, as if it was famished intirely she was."

"What, has that wicked old mother of hers turned her out too, I wonder?" inquired Mary, somewhat softened; "she'd do it fast enough, if she couldn't give her money for gin."

"Ah, that's the tirrible judgment; she towld me all about it. The Lord be marciful to her poor sowl—an' she a Catherlic too!"

"Is she dead, then?" asked Mary, her curiosity overcoming her dislike; "do tell me all about it, Kate."

"Why, you see," said the girl, who required no second bidding, "Mother Buckland was given to dhrink, as you know, an' tuk a dale more than was good for her, more's the pity—an' was passionate, an' ourst, an' led the bad life altogither, widout the fear of God before her eyes. It seems afther Jim an' oursilves wint away, she got worse, an' quarrelled wid Martha, an' made the house too hot to hould the lot iv em. She fell off in the atin' too; not enuff for a midge did she put between her lips; it was nothin' bat dhrink, dhrink all day long. Well, last Sunday was a fortnite, she was sittin' by the fire, wid her feet on the fender, an' the gin-bottle on her lap—for it wasn't able to hould it she was any longer,—whin up wid her she jumps and bolts to the windey; lucky, there was the tree out

airin' the clothes, so Martha pulled her behind, an' down she wint, an' the screeches of her were tirrible, I'm towld; she rolled over the floore an' bawled for wather, an' the more she got the more she wanthed. At last she couldn't bawl any more, but her struggles were dreadful to be sure; an' Martha thought praps, as she'd been christened, a praste ud be able to make somethin' out of her, so she off wid herself for one; but jist when she got near the place she lost heart, an' was shamed to let the clargy know what she was, an' where she bided. Now what did she do but back again, thinking she'd get the owld woman into a dacent place, that she'd borry from one of the people in the street, which you know isn't altogether as bad as the coorte; an' she pawned her shawl to pay them, the craythur. Now, when everythin' was reddy, she wint back for her mother; but there was no movin' her at all, tumblin', an' screechin', an' yelling worse nor iver, and not able to get out one sinsible word. So Martha this time off to the praste in airnest, an' towld him her errand, an' brought him wid her too every inch of the way. But it wasn't much use ayther; for why? whin she got home Missis Buckland was dead, aff, clane gane, an' no mistake. Now, Mary, avourneen, we must forgive and forgit, an' pray for the poor soul that can't help itself." During the first part of Kate's story, there was a cold, unforgiving look in Mary Pratt's eyes strangely at variance with what *ought* to have been the expression of that childish face; gradually, however, it subsided; but she made no remark, and after a short pause exclaimed,

"And now where's the *good* news, girl? I'm

thinking that to you and I, Kattie, luck is something like an angel's visit, rare and far between."

"Ah, but it's raly good news, Mary! I've got a situation, afther all."

"You told me that before," said her companion, sharply; for bad example and illness had rendered her selfish, and she dreaded losing the kind and affectionate nurse, to whom, moreover, she was mainly indebted for her means of subsistence.

"Yes, but I didn't tell you where," answered Kate, too full of her own happiness to notice Mary's chagrin. "Ellen is goin' to be married; an' now Mrs. Selby's got used to me, they've promised to thry me as Miss Bradshawe's own maid. It's a dale I've larnt already by goin' backward an' forward; an' afther I've been in the house a month intirely wid Ellen, who's very partial to me now, an' has left off makin' game of me, they say it's altogether shutable I'll be."

"And leave me to starve;" and the poor weak irritable creature burst into a paroxysm of tears. Kate twined her arms round her, kissed and soothed her, saying, as she did so, "No, darlin', that's the best news of all, an' its dying I am to tell you all about it; but Miss Bradshawe tould me not, an' said it was here she'd be as soon as meeself, an'——"

"She is here, Kate," exclaimed the well-known voice of Josephine, who had entered unperceived; "but what have you been doing to Mary?" Kate looked confused; but extricating herself as speedily as possible, carefully dusted an old box, set it on an end, respectfully requested Miss Bradshawe to be seated, and then added, "Mary was crying, my lady, at partin' me; not

that it was dark she was at my good fortin, but it's loné-some widout me she'd be." And she compressed her lips firmly, as though to intimate how well she had kept the secret confided to her charge.

"Do not fret, my poor child," said Josephine, kindly; "you shall be cared for until you too are able to take a situation."

"A situation, madam?—surely you forget——" she fixed her eloquent eyes on her visitor's face, whilst her pallid cheeks were suffused with burning blushes, and her slight frame trembled with the excess of emotion.

"I forget nothing, Mary," answered Miss Bradshawe, still more gently, affectionately pressing the thin-wasted hand which lay on the coverlet. "You are now well enough to be removed; I shall send you into the country; an old nurse of mine will take care of you until you are quite recovered, and then you shall go for a year or two to the 'Good Shepherd,' where the kind nuns will fit you for service, and make you good and happy. The past will be all forgotten, and there will then be no difficulty in obtaining a situation for you." Mary, to Kate's great astonishment, did not look half so overjoyed as the latter expected, and after a short pause she inquired—

"But, madam, is not the 'Good Shepherd,' a Magdalen?"

"Yes, Mary; why do you ask?"

"Because one of the girls at that—that house had been in a penitentiary; she came out worse than ever, and I really don't think I should like it at all."

"That was not a Catholic establishment, Mary. At

Hammersmith you will be under the charge of nuns, *ladies* who, as you know, have left their parents, their homes, and in some cases their country, to embrace the religious life, uniting the rules of the Visitation (which I have always considered one of the most perfect) with the greatest act of charity which it is possible for a pure and spotless human being to exercise towards her fallen fellow-creatures."

This explanation was not quite intelligible to Kate; but Mary, better educated, understood every word, and quietly answered, "I do not think, madam, I should like to be shut up all my life even with nuns; there is something to me dull in the idea of a convent."

"You can never be a *nun* at the 'Good Shepherd,' Mary, nor will you live with the religious; the convent and asylum are quite distinct. The sisters who attend you take it by turns; your meals, occupations, and amusements will be shared with your own companions; and of course you can leave whenever you think proper, though it is advisable for you to remain sufficiently long to insure in your regard the end of this admirable institute."

"But you mentioned amusements, madam; I thought a penitentiary was a place to punish those who had led a bad life?"

"It is a place to *reform* them, Mary; to restore lost innocence, and with it lost happiness. You will be allowed every harmless recreation; and when I come to see you, I expect a pretty nosegay out of your own little garden."

"Garden!—shall I be allowed a garden?" and the girl's face brightened as she glanced wistfully towards

that to which she owed so much, now looking dreary enough, enveloped as it was in a yellow London fog: "and they will let me see you and Kattie, and not beat me? I've had so much ill treatment, it makes me tremble whenever I think of it; but I dare say I should be very happy—only——"

"Beat you? why, my child, the most severe punishment you can have to expect is to be deprived of some little unnecessary luxury, something you particularly fancy, or to be enjoined an extra half-hour's silence, as a mother would correct a wayward child, whose welfare, spiritual and temporal, is the object nearest her heart. Were you so incorrigible as to need beating, the nuns, in justice to the remainder of the penitents, would be compelled, however unwillingly, to dismiss you. And now for the meaning of your *only*, for I see there is something more."

"I was thinking, madam, that perhaps if the others were better than myself, and knew how wicked I've been, and I so young, they'd jeer me, and taunt me, and not wish to speak to me; and that would break my heart."

"No such thing can happen," answered Josephine, as her eyes filled with tears of joy at the genuine and deeply-felt contrition evinced by this speech. "The most trifling allusion to the past life of a penitent is never permitted either by herself or companions; and so strictly is this rule enforced, that not even to the nuns themselves would its infringement be tolerated. Think how delightful it will be, Mary, to hear Mass every day, attend the Sacraments regularly, have kind friends, good example, no care but to do your duty, no

temptations from others, and the certainty that, if you remain the full time, you will be fitted to earn your bread honestly and respectably."

"But," said Kate, compassionately, "av coorse they'd be 'bliged to work, an' Mary's not over sthrong, an' praps it's angry wid her they'd be if she didn't do as much as the others."

"Their modes of employment are sufficiently varied to suit the difference of constitution, even tastes: household duties, washing, ironing, needlework—all these have their appointed place; and, depend upon it, their happiness is increased, not diminished, by regular habits and occupation."

"I don't doubt it," answered Kate with an effort; "but my lady, though it's proud an' grateful I am to take the grand situation, if it's comfort to the craythur I'd be, why I'd go wid her, an' no more about it. I'm hearty enough now, thank God, an' ud do the work of two, niver fear, an'——"

"It would not do, Kate," said Miss Bradshawe, touched by the girl's disinterested affection. "Much as I commend your kindness for this worse than orphan, I must not allow you to be injudicious in its display; I have done the best I could for you both, and I expect to be obeyed. I am sure *you*, Mary, will offer no further opposition to my wishes when I inform you it was the earnest desire of your father—who, erring as he was, yet loved you with a parent's affection—that if ever you crossed my path I should do my best to save and reclaim you."

"Did you ever see my father, madam?" exclaimed Mary, much surprised.

"I did once, at your mother's death-bed; he ——"

"Oh Miss Bradshawe! O Kate! tell me—my mother, my poor mother, did she—did she know ——"

"She knew nothing; that pang, thank God, was spared her. Your father arrived *after* her death, and she expired believing you still with him."

"Then I'm happy, quite happy," exclaimed the girl, clasping her hands in an ecstasy of joy. "Kate knew nothing about it, and I dared not ask you before; but now that *she* did not feel the shame I'd brought on her, I'll try and take heart."

"Do so, Mary; and when you are virtuous and happy, do not forget to pray for the conversion of your poor father."

"Ah," interrupted Kate, "an' that minds me of Florry. Mary Sheehan tould me it was afther him his wife was gone; her people made up the money amongst them; so it's aisey now I am."

"To-morrow, then," said Miss Bradshawe, "you both leave this miserable place. You, Kate, come to me; and Mary shall be sent for a month to Nerwood, that she may become quite well and strong before she goes to Hammersmith. God bless you both!" So saying, she stooped, and, imprinting a kiss on the brow of the invalid, departed.

As the last fold of her black robe disappeared, the girls again threw themselves into each other's arms and wept; the one almost with joy, the other with a mixture of feeling, for which even she herself would have found it difficult to account.

CHAPTER XVI.

LINA.

It was the festival of Saint Agnes, and the pure transparent sky which constitutes one of the principal charms of a Roman winter lent a beauty, peculiarly its own, to the lofty crumbling walls, so gay in their attire of luxuriant ivy, that enclose the vineyard by which the ancient baptistry of "*Sta Agnese fuori le Mura*," better known as the mausoleum of "*Sta Costanza*," is surrounded. It had been at an unusually early hour (at least for the English inhabitants of the Eternal city to bestir themselves) that a numerous and mixed party issued from the Porta Nomentana (Pia), for the purpose of visiting the magnificent church erected by Constantine on the level of the catacombs where the body of the saint was discovered; as they descended the marble steps leading to the nave, there was of course the usual parade of disrespectful levity by which our countrymen consider themselves bound to wound the purest and best feelings of those, on the august ceremonies of whose religion they are prompted by curiosity to intrude; and in accordance with this fixed principle (although mass was at that moment commencing in a small chapel celebrated as possessing Michael Angelo's sculptured "Head of Christ"), they scrupled not to linger on the staircase, decipher the inscriptions with which its walls are covered; lounge against the columns, discuss the relative merits of granite, pavonazzo, and porta-santa marble, of which they are formed, in no very modulated tones; whilst one, and she was of the

gentler sex, actually drew forth her tablets, and for the amusement of her companions produced a spirited caricature of the attitudes of fervid devotion that distinguished a group of peasants who knelt, absorbed in prayer, near one of the porphyry pillars which support the canopy over the high altar, adorned by a statue of their patroness, "an eked out ancient *torso* of oriental alabaster."

There were, however, four, and those not the least distinguished of the number, perfectly free not only from the bad taste evinced by their companions, but from the worse feeling by which it was actuated ; two in short were Catholics, and as they sank on their knees before the rich silver shrine containing the relics of the saint, the eyes of the gentlemen who formed their immediate escort were fixed on them, the one with intense, almost painful attention, the other with a glance of undisguised admiration ; yet it too had its alloy, the spring of which, though deeply concealed within the soul, would at times well forth, giving its dash of bitterness to the purest streams of happiness, and then quietly subside, until again disturbed by a word—a look, a memory. Regardless of the attention they excited, heedless of the flight of time, the girls continued before the steps of the high altar, and whilst the beads of her rosary flew rapidly through the fingers of the impassioned Italian, and her beautiful eyes, positively blazing with the fire of her native sky, were fixed with an earnest gaze of enthusiasm, gratitude, and love, on the image of the child martyr, her animated gestures, her restless though graceful movements, offered as marked a contrast as might be to the still, drooping

figure, bent head, clasped hands, and above all, the wrung though resigned heart, whose wild beatings were so carefully concealed under the calm exterior of the truly English Josephine. And both had cause for the emotions by which they were moved; once more, with her uncle's full consent, with the sanction even of the bereaved mother of Angela, had Lord Norville, proof against the witcheries of the fascinating Lina, proof even against the coldness of her he had ever continued to love, pleaded for the renewal of those ties, never effectually sundered, pleaded for an affection which in *her* heart was as deep as ever, in *his* had been barely stifled during his brief engagement with her cousin; and then for the first time did Josephine feel the barriers of the edifice erected by duty reel to their very foundation,—then did the fairy vision of a life-long happiness open to her view—then did she picture to herself the realizations of all her young aspirations; the consoler, the *enobler*, and above all, the guide to that religion which without her he might never embrace; and *then*—with every bright prospect before her, with every glad hope re-awakened, every deep feeling rekindled, *there*, in the very stronghold of the faith she so prized, treading a land so endeared to every Catholic heart, beneath the deep and almost English luxuriance of the dark pine-groves of the Borghese palace, there did she repeat her determination, not to be the bribe for which Lord Norville might be led to barter away his conscience; she bade him tear from his heart the image which had filled it, despite assumed indifference, fancied anger, for so many years; and as she heard him tell of a form which had hovered by his

side, in the camp, the senate, aye, even whilst breathing his love tales at the feet of another, she bade him, with unfaltering voice, replace it with that of Lady Lindore's orphan niece, the Italian Lina ; and when all this was said, she turned away, but it was with hands tightly compressed over her aching heart, and eyes from which streamed the bitterest tears she had ever shed. Weeks had flown since then ; and Lord Norville had obeyed her wish ; perhaps he was deceived by the outward control evinced by her, whose every emotion had once been reflected on her countenance ; perhaps he believed Josephine was really consulting her own inclinations, that she would fain recall her rash promise, and was eager by his marriage with another to free herself from its fulfilment ; perhaps he was piqued, angry, wounded ; at any rate he obeyed, and by his subsequent manner she had the additional trial of finding herself misjudged, treated as a fanatical enthusiast,—she who, by the last sacrifice of her *one* deep affection, had so rooted up its very seeds within her bosom, as to prevent their ever again springing forth, rendering the soil henceforward arid and barren to any flower this world could plant. But Josephine, independent of the solid though not always sensible consolations afforded by her religion, had yet another source of happiness, vague, strange, undefined, one which she was obliged to treat as imaginary, almost superstitious, and yet it was there, to cheer, support, nay, strengthen ; it was a presentiment that to her this passing scene, with its hopes and fears, would soon be as naught ; it was an *idea*, against which she struggled, reasoned, and in vain ; but now, as on the eve of Lina's bridal day she knelt by her side before

the shrine of St. Agnes, it returned with redoubled force, standing even between her and that religious life to which, as soon as might be after her arrival in England, she had resolved to dedicate herself, and then she knew it for a temptation, and rejected it accordingly.

"Is she not beautiful?" exclaimed Lady Lindore, as, detaching herself from those of whose conduct even *she* began to feel ashamed, she approached her husband, and passed her hand within his arm. "Is she not *very* beautiful—and—and so like——"

The earl started, gazed for a moment in the dark tearful eyes of his wife and then at Lina, who, having arisen from her knees, was leaning against a pillar, waiting until Miss Bradshawe should have terminated prayers, the length of which, to tell the truth, began to weary this restless child of the south.

"Like my Angela, you would say," he rejoined in a subdued tone. "Yes, very; and I rejoice for your sake it is so."

"And why not for your own? Little did I think, when I was so angry with my poor sister for rearing up her child in the faith of her dead husband (a religion, by the way, which I never can or will tolerate)—little did I think that her orphan was destined to take the place of my lost darling; but she is exceedingly lovely, and I have no doubt will cause quite a sensation."

Lord Lindore frowned, let fall the hand which with (for him) an unusual demonstration of feeling he had pressed closely to his side; but the countess, too absorbed by her own ideas to heed the action, continued—

"Besides, I do not see it signifies much what religion she is of *after* she is married ; if Lord Norville has no objection to her continuing a Catholic, I suppose I had better not interfere,—it would have been a different thing with Josephine, who possesses (I beg your pardon, Lindore) all the obstinacy of her mother's family ; but, as I was saying, Lina is quite another being—so pliant, so child-like, so yielding, that——"

"Yielding in all which does not clash with what she styles '*conscience*,'" retorted the earl, bitterly. "If there is to be any *conversion* in the case, depend upon me, it will not be your little niece, but her husband."

"This comes of Josephine's schooling ; how I do detest firm-minded young ladies ; I shall take vast care she does not obtain any influence over Cyril ; for really, when I think of her extraordinary conduct when my poor pet was dying, and I so overcome, I begin to consider her a very dangerous person."

"Your own influence over Cyril (young as he is) is so unbounded," retorted her husband, sarcastically, "that I do not imagine you have anything to fear from Josephine ; and when I reflect how much mental anguish was, from her presence of mind, spared my expiring child, I can forgive even this last act of wilfulness."

"You would rather the daughter of *your* sister, not mine, had been countess of Norville ? Well, she has only herself to blame ; I am sure I gave up *my* feelings, which few mothers, under the circumstances, could have been expected to do."

"I would rather Josephine Bradshawe had been the wife of *Edgar Wellborne*, than *even* Angela ; but, as

you justly observe, she has only herself to blame—silence, or she will overhear you ;” and as the unconscious subjects of this conversation advanced, Lord Lindore seized his niece’s hand with a mingled feeling of affection and displeasure, leaving the countess to take charge of the pretty Lina, who followed, leaning on the arm of her affianced husband. It was not long ere the young Italian discovered she was the only one of the trio completely at her ease. Nettled by the earl’s allusion to a son, whom over-indulgence had rendered perfectly independent of control, her aunt preserved a moody silence, whilst Lord Norville (although he tried hard to look, and even believe himself perfectly happy) was so abstracted, and returned such vague answers to her remarks, that Lina, in despair, gave up any further attempt at conversation.

Not far from the church of Sta Agnese is the circular edifice alluded to in the commencement of this chapter, as the mausoleum of St. Constantia, the precise origin of which has formed one of those learned puzzles so difficult, or rather impossible, to unravel ; for whilst the antiquarian strenuously contends it was erected as a temple of Bacchus, the Catholic writers no less positively affirm it to have been merely a baptistery to the adjoining church, afterwards converted by Constantine into a sepulchre for his daughter, whose body was removed from the sarcophagus in which it was deposited, and placed under the high altar by Pope Alexander IV., who allowed the church to be consecrated, and dedicated to the saint whose name it now bears. Notwithstanding its architectural defects, and the total absence of beauty in the columns of grey and red granite by

which the cupola is supported, this edifice must ever, from its associations, be an object of intense interest, more especially to those Catholic pilgrims, natives of a land where they are doomed to behold almost every monument of that religion for which their martyred forefathers cheerfully poured out their heart's best blood desecrated by the phantom of a worship without substance or reality; and whose one neutral ground seems a wordy crusade of absurd calumnies, which the very presence of the sainted dead who professed that faith against which they so zealously inveigh might make them blush to utter. Notwithstanding the want of skill evinced in its arrangement as a whole, there is much in the details of this building to admire; the vaulted roof of the gallery surrounding the dome is richly incrustated with ancient mosaics, representing beautiful children sporting with the ripe clusters amongst the tendrils of the vine; but probably the principal charm of the church of St. Constantia is its commanding and advantageous situation, bounded on all sides by a large oblong vineyard, whose high and dilapidated walls are, as I before said, rendered still more picturesque by the mantle of glossy ivy with which nature has invested them. To a kind of natural harbour shadowing the moss-covered trunk of a fallen tree, Lord Lindore in silence conducted his niece, and as a gap in the wall here admitted an unimpeded view of the extensive prospect, both paused for a moment, gazing with something of a kindred feeling over the desert *Campagna*, skirted by its sweep of low mountains, whose snow-covered summits presented such a diversity of light and shadow, as would have made the

painter dash aside his pencil, and confess, with a sigh, how poor, weak, and powerless is the hand of man, when compared with that of the great Creator. Apparently not far from where they stood, though it was really about three miles' distance, the celebrated Mons Sacer reared its head, its steep rampart-like side covered with long luxuriant grass, destitute of column or memorial; itself, in its stern loneliness, its own best monument, that here at least the Roman virtues had been proved no fable. Bathing the very base of the hill wound the silvery Anio, glittering in the morning sun, as a diamond thread imbedded by some strange freak of nature in a block of verdant emerald.

An exclamation of unqualified delight burst from the lips of both Josephine and her uncle; their eyes met, there was in *her* glance all the confiding, trustful affection of her childhood; in *his*, more than forgiveness of the past; there was a renewal of tenderness for the child, mingled with admiration for the fortitude which had so systematically characterized the conduct of the woman; and there at length, in view of the "Eternal City," surrounded by its monuments of ancient greatness, its modern wonders of Catholic art, was the barrier which had so long estranged these two hearts at once and for ever removed. Both knew it, both felt it; there needed no speech to express the renewed confidence between them, and when Lord Lindore did speak, it was to utter the name of his lost child; yet, as the word "Angela" reached Miss Bradshawe's ears, she turned paler than usual, for it was the first time (at least to her) that her uncle had ever alluded to his daughter since her death; her lips quivered, she averted her

- head, and then burst into tears. Fairly overcome by the sight of her grief, the earl seated himself; drawing her to his side, he passed his arms around her, and whilst the sobbing girl nestled in his bosom, he yielded to a gush of feeling,—stronger from the matter-of-fact severity of the nature it had with such difficulty fused and penetrated. In that moment his early love for Mary, his more than paternal fondness for Angela, seemed as it were centered on Josephine, the link which united him to both; the memory so intimately entwined with theirs, that it was impossible to separate them either in his mind or heart. “What of her dear uncle?” at length exclaimed Miss Bradshawe, raising her head and fixing her gaze on his face; they were his sister’s earnest eyes; and it was not the proud statesman, but the boy brother of Lady Mary Malvern, who replied—
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“Josephine, we do not part again; on our return to England, your home is henceforth under the roof which sheltered your childhood; that is, if you too can forgive.” Those eyes sparkled, the rich glow of joy suffused her very brow, then bending down, she pressed her lips to his hand; but when she again encountered his penetrating glance, the glad expression had flown, her resolution to devote herself to God was remembered; but she could not *then* dash his cup with bitterness, knowing, as she did, that to-morrow’s trial would be greater to him than herself. Poor Josephine, it seemed as though her whole existence were destined to be one perpetual struggle with feelings, the strength and concentration of which rendered them formidable opponents. All farther conversation was, however, prevented by the approach

of their entire party ; and amidst the endless babble and wearisome impertinences of the satiated pleasure-hunters, they re-entered the carriages, which proceeded at a rapid pace towards Rome.

CHAPTER XVII.

UNEXPECTED.

AUTUMN had deepened into winter ; spring, summer, then autumn, then another winter, and Josephine sat alone in one of the magnificent apartments of a stately country-house in the heart of one of England's fairest and most luxuriant counties ; an old Norman building, known in the neighbourhood by the name of Burville Castle. It was beautifully situated in the midst of a lordly park, shadowed to the right by the Surrey Hills, to the left embracing a wide expanse of country, diversified by wood and water, fifty acres of the latter belonging to the grounds themselves, owing (it is said) to the fishing mania which had possessed one of its former lords. The thick groves, the verdant sward, the spreading meadows, had now exchanged their emerald mantles for one of spotless white ; the little boat lay moored in the sheltering creek, whilst the bosoms of the frozen lake and streamlets afforded healthful pastime to the village children, whose gay shouts and peals of laughter were borne by the wind to the ears of the inhabitants of that old mansion, 'neath whose protecting shade their forefathers had lived and

flourished for centuries. And if there were blithe sounds without, there were no less happy hearts within ; perhaps none more so than that of her who sat so calmly and silently in that high-backed chair, her feet resting on a cushion, and her eyes bent with such a deep, loving, thankful earnestness on (I erred when I said she was alone) the beautiful sleeping form which lay nestling in her lap. It was that of an infant some two or three months old ; and as she gazed at its little innocent face, with its fringed lashes looking so pretty against its flushed cheeks, tears slowly gathered in her deep-blue eyes, and began to fall, almost unknown to herself. Still they were tears of happiness, of chastened, subdued, yet heart-felt happiness ; and if a cloud did at times fit across her brow, it was something undefined, the foreshadowing of an event to come, a glimpse of the invisible world, on the confines of which her spirit loved to linger, a strange—she knew not what. The child stirred, smiled in its slumbers, and then the touching legend of whispering angels flitted across the mind of Josephine ; it smiled again, but this time the lids were raised, and its large eyes fixed on her face ; it stretched its little round dimpled limbs, and seemed striving with its tiny hands to catch at one of the long tresses which had escaped from her comb and was almost within its grasp.

“ Is he not a darling, Josephine ? ” inquired a low musical voice ; and as she looked up, she encountered the bright playful glance of one who invariably reminded her of the lost Angela.

It was that of Lina, as young and no less beautiful, though bearing in her countenance more decided marks

of her Italian origin. There were the dark looks, the rich olive tint, and above all, those beaming southern eyes, looking as if their deep lustre was but a reflection from their native skies. Yet the figure was still so childlike, the countenance so innocent, that, but for the matronly richness of her attire, and the plain gold ring which encircled the finger of her left hand, one would almost have supposed her still within the precincts of the nursery.

"Is he not a darling, Josephine?" she repeated, making room for herself on the cushion which supported the latter's feet, and laying her pretty head by the side of the infant on her knee. "And what do *you* call yourself, to run away from us in this manner? Why, you might be as happy as the day is long; your uncle allows you to do just as you please; and for Edgar, I am half-jealous of him, he thinks so much of you. Besides, what will poor baby do without his godmother? and I really never can finish converting Norville, unless you stay and help me."

"You will convert him much better your own way, Lina, dear," said Miss Bradshawe, playing caressingly with Lady Norville's curls as she used to do with those of her cousin. "You cannot tell how happy I felt when Lord Norville married you; and, Lina, you must never omit doing all in your power to strengthen your influence, so that in the end he may believe as you—as both of us believe."

"Oh, he is sure to become a Catholic now baby is one," exclaimed the countess innocently. "But he is very angry with you, Josephine, and sent me to talk to you before you see your uncle. Depend upon it, you will

only make Lord Lindore more bitter against Catholics ; and he has such a particular objection to the Good Shepherd, that I think you ought to yield a little, a very little, you know," and she fixed her beautiful eyes imploringly on Miss Bradshawe's face.

" Lina, Lina !" said Josephine, reproachfully, " how can you too conspire against me—you that are a Catholic ? Every argument you can employ I have used to myself, but in vain. It is my vocation ; ought I, dare I, resist it ?"

" But your uncle says he never will give his consent, and that were it in his power, he would withhold even your mother's fortune ; at any rate, he has been advised to consult the lawyers regarding your grandfather's settlement, and——"

" My uncle *says* ? Lady Norville, what can you possibly mean ? Is my uncle here ?"

" You have guessed it. Mind, I didn't tell you. Lord Lindore, instead of writing, has answered your letter in person ; in fact, he was at first so angry, I think he imagined Edgar and myself were aiding and abetting your elopement. Of course, my husband was soon exonerated ; but as to poor little me, Lord Lindore's ideas concerning Papists not being very clearly defined, I am not certain he does not consider me the arch-plotter against his peace—I, that shall lose my best friend, and have no one to advise and take care of me when you are gone ;" and a large tear made her bright eyes appear brighter still, as she coaxingly pressed her lips to the back of Josephine's hand, gazing wistfully, almost timidly, in her face.

Miss Bradshawe looked grave ; and after a pause,

much longer than Lady Norville altogether approved, said quietly,

"Lina, where is nurse? I had better see my uncle directly."

"Kate is in my dressing-room," answered the young mother; "she takes equal care of him, and does not plague me half so much as that consequential Mrs. Cochrane; only the poor girl is broken-hearted at the thoughts of parting with you; it makes me miserable to see her. Your uncle is gone into the park with Norville; and if you put on your bonnet, we will follow them. If we go through the shrubbery, we can cross the trout-stream by the little bridge, and your meeting will be less awkward when we are all together."

As Josephine did not reply, the countess, taking silence for consent, hastily summoned her maid to bring cloaks, bonnets, and *plenty of furs*; for an English winter was, to one of Lina's chilly temperament, an evil to be especially dreaded and guarded against.

Kate speedily appeared, a very different person from the Kate Gearey with whom we were formerly acquainted; prettier than ever, neat, even smart in appearance, and so decidedly improved in manner, that but for a slight, a very slight, brogue, you might have taken her for "real London-bred." With an uneasy and steadfast glance towards Miss Bradshawe, she stooped down to take charge of the infant Lord Wellborne, although both his mother and herself were aware such a proceeding would be visited with supreme indignation by Mrs. Cochrane, who was always ringing her qualifications as an experienced nurse in the ears of

the youthful countess, whilst she in her turn stonily maintained (behind the old lady's back) ~~she knew~~ much better how to manage her own child than all the experienced nurses in the world. Before Kate had succeeded in her object, Josephine raised her hand, and taking the unconscious infant in her arms, imprinted a long fervent kiss on his brow, then relinquished him to the girl, who loved nothing better in the world, if we except Miss Bradshawe herself.

"Now, *Giuseppina mia*," said Lady Norville, as with her two hands clasped over her companion's arm they strolled leisurely and in silence down a wooded path leading through the park in the direction of the rivulet before alluded to, "this is really too bad; you are making us all wretched, and you are wretched yourself."

"No, Lina, I am happy, quite happy; but of course I feel this unexpected arrival of my uncle. I had hoped to have spared us both the pang of parting; and to tell you the truth, love, I am not so able to contend with him as before Angela's death. He is full of prejudices, which it requires older heads and a sterner heart than mine now is to combat successfully. Much as I love him—for I do truly love him, Lina,—I dare not reject the great grace now proffered to me, lest it be turned into a curse. You know for the last year I have been reinstated in my former position, with full freedom to act as my conscience dictates, with (thanks to his liberality) increased means of benefiting my fellow-creature; and why do you suppose I have so valued all that Lord Lindore's bounty has so generously given? That I may make of it a most costly offering; that in

quitting the world I may have something to relinquish, some sacrifice to make for a God who has so loaded me with blessings. Lina, I could not die happy unless I had made this determination ; so do not you increase my difficulties ; for perhaps—perhaps,” and she pressed one of the little hands which rested on her arm, “ that death may not be far distant.”

“ Why, what do you mean, Josephine ? ” inquired Lady Norville, gazing fearfully in her face ; “ you are not ill, are you ? Let us turn back and wait for them in the library.”

“ No, Lina, I am not ill ; but there is that strange feeling over me which I cannot shake off. I wish my uncle had not come. I am not fanciful, yet when I gaze on each dear familiar object, the wild idea will flit across my mind that it is for the *last* time. Lina, you will be kind to Kate ? ”

“ Josephine ! you frighten me to death ; I *must* turn back.”

“ Nonsense, dearest ; I am very silly. Is the lake thoroughly frozen, that those people are allowed to congregate in such numbers upon it ? ”

“ The park-keepers say so, and it is a great amusement for the children ; they have roughened the ice so with their skates, I walked on it this morning myself with Norville.”

“ Poor little things, how happy they look ! listen to their boisterous merriment,” said Josephine, pausing for a moment on a sort of road which divided the broad bosom of the magnificent sheet of water, and on one side of which an artificial cascade, now a perfect fairy temple of icicles, had been constructed for the recreation

of its finny inhabitants. The rising ground on which they stood commanded one of the finest prospects in the neighbourhood; and notwithstanding the intense cold, the sun shone with a brilliancy which lent to that winter scene a species of enchantment, a glittering splendour, awakening the enthusiastic fervour of its youthful mistress.

"Look, just look at the copse!" she exclaimed, raising her hands with delight; "the branches of the trees remind one of so many sprays of white coral studded with diamonds. We will go down those steps, and take the right hand of the stream; or stay, we can pass under the fall now, there is a kind of natural cavern quite through; I did it once in the summer, and made Norville so angry when he saw me reappear dripping like a sea-nymph."

"So I should suppose; Lina, when will you cease to be a child?" said Miss Bradshawe, thoughtfully, as she allowed herself to be led into a narrow, winding passage perforated through the solid rock, and which, though dry enough then, had a peculiarly heavy earthy smell, bringing back that strange foreboding sensation against which she had for a time so ineffectually struggled. It seemed a similar feeling had by some mysterious sympathy communicated itself to Lady Norville; for, twining her arm once more in that of Josephine, they silently continued their walk, until suddenly stopping, she exclaimed—

"How provoking! they have taken the other bank, and we are half a mile from the bridge."

"They will cross, if you make a sign," answered

Miss Bradshawe, "the ice is quite firm; but they are some distance yet, and do not see us."

"No, I tell you what we'll do," said Lina; "we can go over to them. I think I see Norville's surprise when he raises his eyes and beholds *me* in such a situation; he laughed at me this morning, and it will serve him right to give him a fright in his turn."

As the stream was narrow, and appeared to be thoroughly frozen over, Josephine, who saw no cause for apprehending any worse consequence than an occasional fall, could not find in her heart to disappoint her pretty companion, who, completely the slave of impulse, abandoned herself with childish glee to the novelty of the adventure. They had safely accomplished more than half their journey before either of the gentlemen were aware of their proximity. The silvery laugh of Lina, which was its first announcement, had never before produced such an effect on her husband; dropping his companion's arm, he flew to the margin of the stream, wildly tossing his hands to and fro, as though to bar farther approach, shouting as he did so in a frenzied tone, "Lina! Josephine! go back, for God's sake—or stay where you are, until I reach you; did you not see the warning? the ice is rotten!"

Paralyzed by fear, the two girls stood immovable; the countess trembling so violently, as to increase a pressure already too much for the frail substance beneath them. Not daring to stir a foot, they watched with starting eyes the movements of Lord Norville, who, running down the bank, sprang over the treacherous support, which his feet hardly seemed to touch,

endeavouring by a circuitous route to reach the spot where they were. He was already within a short distance, when a loud prolonged crack was heard; and as, with a desperate effort he succeeded in grasping his wife's arm, and dragging her towards the solid block on which he himself was, a gaping fissure yawned where they had stood, and with a deep, unearthly cry of agony Josephine Bradshawe sank slowly, steadily down. In less time than it takes me to write, and before the first echo of her uncle's cries for the assistance he was unable to render had died away, the senseless Lady Norville was laid at the root of a neighbouring oak; whilst her husband, assisted by the foresters and others who had hurried to the spot, were working away with hatchets, removing huge masses of ice with a rapidity almost incredible. Their efforts were speedily crowned with success; and as Lord Lindore gazed on the pallid countenance and motionless form of his niece, the agony he felt at the death-bed of his Angela seemed as nothing compared with that which now rent his heart.

"Thank heaven! she bleeds; there is hope yet, my lord," said the keeper, pointing as he spoke to a cut across the brow, from which the red stream slowly trickled. A litter was hastily constructed of the branches of trees, and the now-recovered Lina would have divested herself of mantle, furs, every article of wearing apparel she could spare, had it not been suggested that such a proceeding would have been injurious to the sufferer.

On their arrival at the castle, messengers were despatched to the nearest town for the best medical

assistance it afforded ; whilst Lord Lindore's valet proceeded by rail to London, to summon not only Dr. Sumners, but Mrs. Selby, in the hope that Josephine would at least survive till their arrival. Too ill herself to be of any use, the countess was conveyed to bed ; and Mrs. Cochrane, finding herself for the first time in undisputed possession of the infant Lord Wellborne, betook herself to the nursery, and lost no time in making up for the past by the administration of certain nostrums and recipes, which had the effect of insuring a sleepless and somewhat musical night both for herself and "the sweet young nobleman," as she was wont to style him. Compelled to act and think for herself, Kate was equally active in sending for a priest ; and then, stationing herself by Josephine's couch, determined, come what might, not to quit her for a moment.

It was the third evening after the accident, which had nearly proved fatal to more than one, and the last of the old year. Josephine lay on the same bed to which she had been borne by the confused and terrified attendants. It was not the room she usually occupied, but one of the state-apartments of the castle, with its stained-glass windows, quaint old portraits, and all those paraphernalia of life's vanity which jar so strangely with its last fleeting moments.

The fever which had succeeded her first insensibility had abated, the deep wound in her forehead was in a fair way to heal ; yet it was obvious to all that the spirit panted and struggled to be free, and that the efforts of the frail body to retain it became hourly, momentarily weaker. It was long before his colleagues could prevail on Dr. Sumners to entertain this opinion,

and as he paced up and down the room, his hands never removed from behind his back except when occupied in administering to himself enormous doses of snuff, he was tempted to disregard the evidence of his own senses, which whispered, as plainly as such obstinate senses could whisper, that Josephine would die.

Lady Norville flitted to and fro, weeping, and accusing her folly as the cause of these misfortunes ; and but for her boy, half wishing she, not Josephine, had been the victim. She would now approach her husband with tones of fond endearment—now whisper a few cheering words to Kate—now endeavour to reason with Mrs. Selby, who, after every one had done their best to explain how the accident had occurred, “ couldn’t and didn’t understand it at all ; and what was more, never would. It was so out of nature that Josephine should get herself killed just as she was going to be a nun ; and unless people were drowned at once, it wasn’t usual for them to die afterwards ; besides, if Josephine died, *how could she be a nun ?* ” and so on, backwards and forwards, until at length it struck the countess that Mrs. Selby’s tongue would be Mrs. Selby’s best consolation. Dr. Sumners was a great deal too formidable for Lina to meddle with ; and Lord Lindore !—she eyed him as he sat, his face buried in one hand, with an earnest, childlike sympathy, not unmixed with awe. She drew near him softly, bent over the back of his chair, then growing bolder, knelt by his side, and gently touched the hand which hung listlessly down. He looked up, gazed at her, first abstractedly as at a stranger, then sternly ; and she knew he remembered all. At length his brow unbent, his look softened,

caressingly he smoothed her glossy hair, murmuring, "Poor child ! Poor child !" and put her tenderly from him. Lina dared no more. There was something in the grief of that grey-haired man too sacred for her to disturb ; noiselessly she stole back, and glided into her accustomed seat by the pillow of Josephine. She slept, and all was hushed ; so still was the room, you might have marked each of her uncertain respirations. The rays of that cloudless moon streamed through the painted window, chequering the oaken floor with such bright and varied hues as threw into shade the carefully-screened lamps which burnt at the lower extremity of the chamber. Now a portion of that pure and holy light fell on the old carved bed, rendering still paler the pale face of the dying girl, investing that composed and motionless form with a nameless charm. Never had the countenance appeared so serene and peaceful as now, with that beam hovering round it like a glory ; and though all present felt the silence to be painful in the extreme, none would be the first to break it. At length Josephine herself was the one to do so. Awakening from her doze, a few scarce intelligible words brought her uncle to her side ; and as she with difficulty besought his forgiveness for all the uneasiness which she had occasioned him, the proud man bowed his head and sobbed aloud. Feebly pressing his hand, she retained it in her grasp and slept again ; whilst Lina and Kate, on bended knees, besought the sweet Virgin to smooth the passage of one who had so loved and trusted in her during life. The last sacraments had been administered not many hours before ; the good priest, being obliged to attend a distant sick-call, had departed with a promise

to return the moment his duties in the confessional should terminate. The hours wore swiftly on as usual, though to those anxious watchers every moment appeared an age, and Josephine woke again ; but this time she did but utter the names of her Divine Redeemer and His blessed Mother. And then came another deeper slumber, and the breath was heavy, as though it issued forth and could not return. The dry burning hand Lord Lindore yet retained became soft and moist as that of a little child ; it grew chiller and more chill in his grasp, the blue eyes opened, were fixed steadfastly on his face, and all gathered round ; for they knew the great change was at hand, and that the soul was about to stand before its God.

Yet the spirit still lingered, when, hark ! borne on the wings of the calm still night, was heard the merry peal of the village-bells ringing out the departing year and greeting its successor. Joyously, blithely do they sound, yet mockingly ; for in that death-chamber they jar strangely on the ear, strained to intensity in its agony of suspense. They smite on the hearts which for the time at least marvel what they have to do with joy ; still they ring blithely, merrily on, when lo ! on the clear frosty air come, solemn and slow, those deep heavy sounds—the knell of the old year ! 'Tis midnight, and then the bells ring forth again more joyously than before to usher in the birth of its infant heir. Presently they cease, and there is heard in the chamber of the dead the low deep voice of God's priest reciting the prayers for a departed soul. None could tell the exact moment, but all were conscious that during that merry joyous peal which told of the departure of the

old year, the life of Josephine Bradshawe had also ebbed away. Not one that was present refused to bend the knee or to join in that last touching service; and when it was ended, Lord Lindore alone exclaimed, "I grudged her to her God; I opposed myself to His will; He has taken her to Himself, and in His own way."

They have silently dispersed; a short hour's bustle and confusion; they have decked her with fair flowers; another brief space, and Kate Gearey kneels alone in that lighted room, telling her beads by the inanimate form of her best, her only friend.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CONCLUSION.

BEFORE I throw aside my pen, a few words concerning the fate of the principal actors of this drama of real life may not be altogether unacceptable. Besides, I am told it is not quite the thing to drop so unceremoniously the acquaintance of people who, it is to be presumed, have by this time created some degree of interest in the breasts of my readers. This chapter of my tale, then, like one of the old comedies, will merely contain the last speech and parting bow of those who have figured therein.

The death of Josephine was of course deeply and sincerely regretted by her own immediate circle. The double bereavement of Lord Lindore, and his permitting his niece to be interred in a Catholic cemetery, caused

much speculation both amongst his private friends and his political party ; indeed, by the latter it was currently reported he would shortly swell the ranks of Popery, and many were the results prophetically anticipated from this great apostasy. It did not take place, however ; he is still as earnest in the cause of ragged-schools and proselytizing as ever ; he is just as much with his friend Mr. Melford as before ; and as the latter is now in Parliament, it is supposed some very stringent measures will soon be brought forward for the complete suppression of religious houses, the evils of which they intend pointing out in a manner calculated to render themselves excessively ridiculous.

Lord Norville is less with his old friend than formerly ; *he* has been received into the bosom of the Catholic Church ; whilst his beautiful Lina, happy as a wife and mother, extends her protection to Kate Gearey in so pointed a manner as to arouse the ire of Mrs. Cochrane. Both the dignity and *principle* of this latter personage leading her to regard "such barefaced favouritism" as a dangerous precedent, not on any account to be tolerated, she, on the birth of the infant Lady Josephine, tendered her resignation, to the great relief of Kate and the undisguised joy of the countess.

Mary Pratt passed her two years' probation in a manner highly beneficial to herself and gratifying to her kind benefactresses. On its expiration, Lady Norville offered to find her a situation in her own establishment ; but not even the prospect of passing her life with her darling Kate could conquer her repugnance to a world which had already proved so fatal to her peace. Miss Bradshawe's death had been to her a severe blow ;

conscious of her own too-yielding disposition, she solicited from the good nuns permission to consecrate herself for three years longer ; and although prevented by the rules of the order from ever becoming a religious, it is her intention not to quit the protection of the roof to which she is so deeply indebted. Florry Daly and the Burkes are conducting themselves so well, that it is expected their term of punishment will be commuted ; should this expectation be realized, they intend emigrating, with the hopes of retrieving their characters in the New World. Pratt is dead ; and Nell Sullivan, whose sentence was lighter than that of her male companions, may be seen again lounging about the Buildings, shunned by the more respectable portion of its inhabitants. Our favourite, Pat Sheehan, has taken the pledge, and, what is more, has kept it too ; he attributes his reformation "intirely to the missionaries." And as he is in constant work, Mary has now a room of her own, and, better still, a beautiful infant of her own ; there is a nurse-child too in the cradle ; whilst the little girl her husband rescued from the brutality of her tormenter and the impending workhouse, is, Mary says, "quite a treasure to her." Moll Carty, whose "possession" became at length the talk and terror of the Buildings, and a lesson to all who were in the habit of having their fortunes told, has left off "doing business," returned to her *duty*, and succeeded to poor old Norry's "pitch ;" but not finding this answer, she removed it after a time to a less aristocratic but more lucrative locality, where she has no objection to give her former experience for the benefit of such as may yet have a hankering inclination to dive into the future.

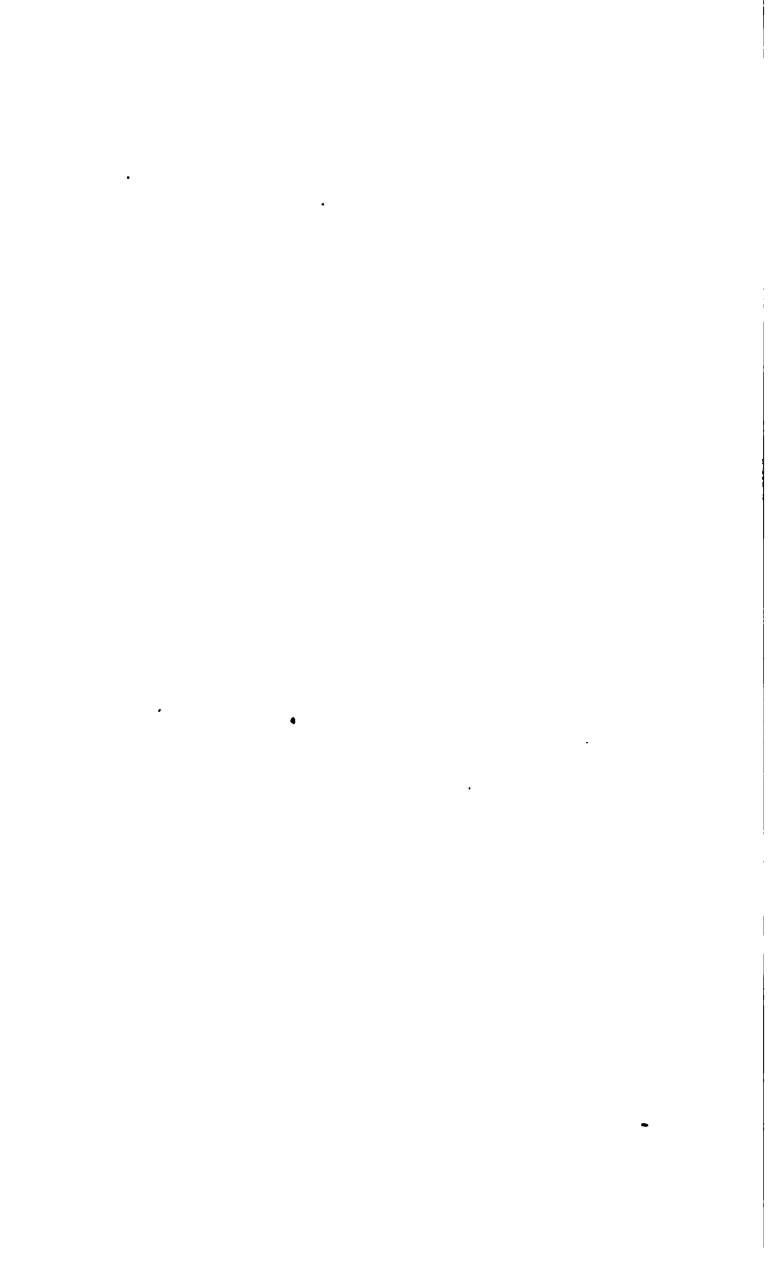
Biddy Sarchfield is dead. Blind Murphy and his grandson lead the same harmless, innocent life as ever. Jim Casey is still an inmate of the "House," though sufficiently recovered to come out every Sunday and alternate Tuesdays, when he dines with the Sheehans, talks over old times, and relates how every week he finds at the porter's lodge a packet containing an ample allowance of "tay, sugar, snuff, an' a thrifle to keep his pocket, diricted to himsilf in Kattie's own hand, as a mark of rispect to Norry, av coorse;" he wears a black crape round his hat for Miss Bradshawe, which he never intends leaving off, and prays for her soul regularly twice a day, and "oftener times on holidays."

It was an intensely cold night, not long after the death of Josephine, that Sheehan, having occasion to cross one of the bridges on his way home from work, observed a figure crouching in the corner of a stone bench under one of the alcoves; it was that of a woman, though so huddled together, it might at first sight have been mistaken for a heap of rags; the bonnet was slouched over her face, and the long black hair, damp and disordered, strayed like elf-locks round her bosom and shoulders. Pat, always good-natured, forgetting Mary's injunction "to keep himself to himself," approached, and raising her head, discovered that the poor creature had indeed fallen a victim to the inclemency of the weather, hunger, or both. She was conveyed on a stretcher to the nearest hospital, where one of her hands was found to be so tightly compressed, as to require some force to unclasp the fingers; when this was accomplished, there rolled from it a hard mouldy crust, which she had retained tenaciously even

in death. A verdict was returned accordingly, and one of the helpers recognised the body as that of the once beautiful Martha Warden.

For the Buildings themselves, their doom is fixed; perhaps even before these pages meet the public eye, they will have ceased to be; the leases have almost expired, and in the present age of improvement there is little doubt of their being razed to the ground. Oh, that the very spot now a perfect pest-house, not from the fault of its inhabitants, but of those authorities whose office it is to see that the abodes of their fellow-creatures are properly drained, ventilated, cleansed, and lighted;—oh, that the very spot could be the site of those model lodging-houses, the plan of which at present occupies the minds of a few philanthropic individuals, though their endeavours are as yet shackled for want of funds and encouragement! And if this tale, in which *truth has been softened, not exaggerated*, should induce even *one* to lend a helping hand towards this noble, this most useful scheme, not only for physical comfort, but moral improvement, I shall be amply compensated for all the difficulties I have encountered in the fulfilment of my task.

THE END.



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